

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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Origin and Early History of the Mennonite Church in Nebraska

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Nebraska was an impressive sight to the Mennonite farmers who moved into her territorial bounds with sacrifice to physical comfort and assurance of prosperity, presenting both immensity and color.

The first Mennonite settlements in Nebraska were made during the first half of the 1870's. "Settlements in Kansas and Nebraska were begun about 1870. Henry Yother, a Pennsylvania bishop, was one of the first to locate as far west as Nebraska."¹ These early settlements were in the vicinity of Milford in Seward County and were made by the Amish of Illinois. "The cheap lands of Nebraska attracted the Amish soon after the state was organized. The first settlement was made by a small colony of eight families in Seward County."² The dates given by different authorities on the earliest Mennonite settlement in Nebraska are not in agreement, still it is certain that it was after 1870 and in a southeastern location.

Nebraska contains a number of Mennonite branches and these have varied in conference association from time to time. This research study does not include the thousands of Russian Mennonites, now a part of the General Conference Mennonite Church, who migrated to the plain states and Canada during this same period of history. Only those nine Nebraska churches which are now in the Iowa-Nebraska Conference of the Mennonite Church of America and their earlier affiliations will be discussed.

The number of Amish Mennonites migrating to Nebraska during the first few years was very small, limited to a handful of those who settled in and around Seward County. In the last five years of the 1870's the population of Mennonites sharply increased, aiding the first settlers to form communities and churches. "While new members were moving in all the time [Sterling, Ill.] there were some who were attracted to states farther west. In the period from 1875-1880, a large group moved to Nebraska."³ A letter from Seward County bears evidence of a church increase of nearly tripled numbers. "... we endeavored to organize a church in the name of the Lord on the 26th of March of same year [1878]. The



Amish Mennonite couple in Nebraska. Christian Roth (April 20, 1840—August 2, 1903) and his wife Katherine (Zehr) Roth (October 5, 1841—April 20, 1910) were the parents of Bishop Nicholas E. Roth (1870-1939). Both lived and died near Milford, Nebr.

membership was small, only eight families, but the number has now increased to 22 families."⁴ Aside from these, only a small flow of settlers were coming to the lands of Nebraska. The greatest period of movement was still to come.

With the year 1880 and after, the Nebraska Mennonites were joined by hundreds of other Mennonites who finally were able to make the journey. The ill effects of the depression of 1873 which had closed the doors of the New York Stock Exchange were subdued by this time. The economic position of the country was much more stable and ventures of land buying were not avoided as they had been previously. The first settlers had changed the land from a wilderness to fields of production, making the attraction of the West more favorable than in years earlier.

The period of the eighties was characterized by a large amount of church expansion and settlement in the western areas of the state. These western locations were mainly due to the lack of

available land in the eastern counties, and to the cheaper lands offered in the less fertile sections toward the west. During this time new settlements were made in Holt, Deuel, Logan, Hamilton, York, Frontier, and Adams counties, Nebr. Many churches were the outgrowth of a mother church established at Milford in Seward County, while others were of their own initiative, some lasting permanently, some eventually becoming extinct. "Out of the first church at Milford seven other congregations have grown up since its establishment in 1876."⁵ By 1890, most of the early churches had been established, except for a few which came in the 1920's.

The first major center of (Old) Mennonites was in Seward County. This county is located in the southeastern section of the state and offered excellent farm land for the migrating Mennonites. The first recorded date for this settlement is April 3, 1873, when eight families located a few miles west of Milford, Seward County.⁶

"Their first communion was held October, 1875, by Rev. Christian Kapf, of McLean Co., Ill., who was sent by the conference held in Illinois that year . . . In the spring of 1876, Rev. Paul P. Hershberger came from Henry Co., Iowa . . . Late that fall communion was held by Rev. Neohzecker and Rev. Zoher from Woodford Co., Ill."⁷

It was not until five years after the first settlement was made that a church was built. "They began to feel the need of a house of worship and as a result the first church building was erected in 1878 at the cost of \$1,368. It was 28 feet wide, 40 feet long and 12 feet high."⁸ The church grew very rapidly and by 1890 there were 90 families members of the four-year-old church.⁹

In the following years there were many new Mennonite settlers to move into Seward County, resulting in the formation of other branch churches. The original church later became known as the East Fairview Church, the name which it holds to the present. Two other churches are now in existence within Seward County, West Fairview and Milford Amish Mennonite. West Fairview began shortly before the turn of the century, and was first known as the Beaver Crossing Amish Mennonite Church. The lo-

cation was west of the original church and northeast of the village of Beaver Crossing. The original name was retained until 1910 when West Fairview became the preferred title.

The church which is now in the town of Milford went through a number of changes. The first church to be established in Milford was of the Defenseless Mennonite Conference. Later the Milford Amish and Mennonite Church was founded by the mother church, the East Fairview Church.

These three churches in Seward County constitute the largest single (Old) Mennonite community in Nebraska, over half of the state's total. Their background is Amish, suggesting an origin of Illinois. In a letter to the *Herald of Truth* in 1880 one person even termed the brethren as being Amish and not Mennonite. "At this time there are nearly 90 families of Amish brethren living in that settlement."¹⁰ One of the most outstanding figures of the early church formation of Seward County was Joseph Schlegel, an Amish bishop from Illinois. He made his way into Seward County in 1879 and became very influential in church affairs in a period that extended for over 30 years.¹¹

The second greatest populated area in the first years of settlement was Roseland and the surrounding lands of Adams County, located 70 miles west by southwest of Seward County and resting in the fertile valley of the Little Blue River. The first Mennonites moved into this section around 1878 and made their homes on rural farm lands throughout the county. A reader of the *Herald* tells of early conditions:

"There are now living here eight families of our denomination . . . and the number will be further increased by a few families who intend to move here in the spring. We have commenced to hold meetings every three weeks as long as cold weather lasts, and when it becomes warm again, we may have it oftener."¹²

It was a year later, March 20, 1880, when the first church was started in Roseland with a membership of 29. Albrecht Schiffler was the minister at the time of organization and held the position for a good number of years.¹³

By the fall of 1882, the church in Roseland was able to build its first building with the aid of outside funds. They were so desirous of a place to hold worship that the trustees were willing to give their possessions as security. In search of aid they published an item in the Sept. 1, 1882, issue of the *Herald*.¹⁴

The church prospered very slowly at first, much due to the need of ministers and other hardships which the church withstood. It was some time later when a favorable membership increase was experienced.

Although Roseland was the location of the church, many of the members lived in surrounding towns. Some of the settlements in addition to Roseland were: Ayr,

Silver Lake, and Juniata, all of Adams County. The land was very adaptable for agriculture and was offered at reasonable prices, giving advantage to the Mennonites who were predominantly farmers. The majority of the Mennonites of this vicinity came from Illinois and Pennsylvania, with a few from Germany.¹⁵

Roseland was not of the same original conference as Milford and the other main churches who belonged to the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference. Because of a non-Amish background, the Roseland church first joined the Kansas-Nebraska Conference district. She was host to a number of the early conference meetings, namely on: Oct. 6, 1882; Oct. 3, 1884; and Oct. 1, 1885.¹⁶ Roseland remained a member of the conference until 1922 when the new Iowa-Nebraska Conference was formed.

The Mennonite settlement of Chappell, Nebr., the most westerly church, was started in 1836 when three families from Milford bought land at that location under homestead provisions. Chappell is in Deuel County at the corner where Colorado makes her indentation of Nebraska, and over 200 miles from Lincoln. During the two years after the initial settlement by the three families, a number of additional Mennonites moved in, making it possible to organize a church in 1833.¹⁷

The East Fairview Church, as it was later called in respect of the mother church, found it difficult to obtain a minister for the conducting of services. The *Herald* of 1888 recorded this plea for a leader: "There are here 12 families of Amish Mennonites and no preacher. We would be very glad if we could have regular services."¹⁸ A year and a half later the members of the Chappell church were still without a resident minister.¹⁹ Occasionally a passing minister was able to conduct services for these people who were in such thirst for spiritual guidance. However, by 1893 the church was blessed with a minister, N. E. Roth, and prospered.

The church at Shickley, Nebr., known as the Salem Church, was organized in the 1890's with 12 members. The first settlers to the location were from Seward, their next county northeast. The church remained small for the first decade of its existence but soon took root and grew to near the 200 mark 20 years after its birth. In 1905 the first church building was erected; it was remodeled in 1923. The services were held in German until around 1910 when the transfer was made to the English language.²⁰ It is interesting to note that shortly after the time of language transition the membership increased to almost double its previous figure. In the year 1908 Shickley reported 95 members and in 1913 the number had increased to 184.²¹

This covers the early churches in Nebraska but there are also three later areas which are represented: Beemer-Wisner, Wood River, and Broken Bow. The

church at Beemer, located in Cuming County toward the northeastern corner of the state, is the oldest of the three, being organized in the late nineties. It began as did most of the other churches by a few families who had brought their desire for common worship with them into the sparsely populated area. The church, although small at first, found little difficulty in increasing its numbers and grew quickly in the first years. By 1905 there were 40 members, multiplying to 50 in 1908 and 94 in 1914. The early ministers of the church were Joseph H. Birkey, Peter Oswald, and Joseph Grieser.²²

The Wood River and Broken Bow congregations were the latest of the churches in Nebraska. The Wood River Church is in Hall County just north of the Platte River. The Mennonites first came into Hall County before the beginning of the new century, but it was not until later when sufficient numbers were settled that a church could be formed. The formation of the church as connected with the earliest affiliation with the Western District was around 1910. The membership at the time was 86, indicating it had been in existence a period before entering the Conference. The church at Broken Bow, Custer County, centered near the middle of Nebraska, was the outgrowth of the older churches toward the southeast. It came into the Iowa-Nebraska Conference in 1930 with 29 members. The membership remained steady for a few years and then took a considerable drop during the middle thirties. Lately, however, the church has grown larger and evidence suggests it will retain that level.²³

In addition to the nine now present churches in Nebraska there have been numerous churches which are nonexistent or connected with other conferences. The most recent church to become nonexistent in the Iowa-Nebraska Conference was the church at O'Neill in Holt County. The Mennonites moved into the area in the beginning part of the 1830's. An early settler from O'Neill wrote this to the *Herald* in 1883: "There are already several families residing here, and we hope to build up a church . . . We hope others from the east may be induced to settle here."²⁴ Many of these people had come from Canada while others were originally from the midwestern states. The land was considered poor, still, with proper cultivation very abundant crops could be grown.²⁵ The membership was rather large at first but soon many moved out and the church dwindled rapidly. From the period of 1920 to 1930 the decrease was so sharp that only eleven members remained. The church hovered around this number, then slowly dropped till in 1944 with one member it withdrew from the conference.²⁶

A section once strong with Mennonite settlement but never connected with either the Western District or the later Iowa-Nebraska Conference was the town of Aurora of Hamilton County. Most of the

members of this church were from the counties in central Illinois. This and the number of the settlement is shown in a letter written to the *Herald* by Christian Rediger, the leader of the early church.

When I came here with my family four years ago from Livingstone Co., Ill., there were only three or four families of the Mennonite Church in this settlement. Every year since, however, some of our brethren came to look for new homes, and as it suited them they bought land and settled here.²⁷

The church was divided into two sections, the English service and the German service, each separately listed in the *Mennonite Yearbook*. Because the church was predominantly Illinois Amish in background, it remained in the Illinois Central Conference of Mennonites.²⁸

Many areas because of their isolation from other sister congregations were unable to fully develop into organized churches. One of these was Gandy, Logan County, on the south edge of the sand hill section. Due to the poor land conditions and the hardships from weather many of the settlers returned to the better land of the southeast after having spent a period of time here in Gandy. Another area scattered with small groups of Mennonites was the three south central counties of Harlan, Hayes, and Frontier. These and many other small areas were started, but for reasons of limited numbers and financial loss they soon died out, most members moving back to stronger Mennonite communities.

Conference Development

After the various settlements in Nebraska had been made and a series of churches formed, the movement for unity through a conference type structure was begun. The station of authority remained in the local church, but with conference connections a greater circle of fellowship could be made.

The earliest conference to appear in Nebraska was the Kansas-Nebraska Conference representing the Mennonite rather than the Amish Mennonite churches of the West. Roseland, not having Amish influence, was the only church from Nebraska in its membership. The date of origin of this conference is set at the spring of 1879 when a meeting was held in McPherson County, Kansas. It was at this time representatives from the Roseland congregation first attended the conference. Thus making it the Kansas-Nebraska Conference instead of Kansas alone. The meetings for this conference were held semiannually in the months of April or May and October. The site rotated among four or five churches which were located favorably for each area. The first conference to be held in Roseland was on Oct. 6, 1882, with only a small number attending due to the unusual distance involved.²⁹ Here is the notice of that meeting as it appeared in the *Herald*:

The Annual Conference for Osborne county, Kansas, and Adams county, Nebraska, will this year be held in Adams county, on the first Friday in October (Oct. 6th). The brethren, and especially bishops and ministers are invited to be with us at that time.³⁰

The rest of the churches in Nebraska were much slower in their association with conferences. Being Amish Mennonite churches they refrained from joining the Kansas-Nebraska Conference and waited until a conference of their own could be established. By 1890 an Amish Mennonite Conference took form with a meeting at Sycamore Grove, Cass Co., Mo. Here churches from the states of Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska drew up the basis for the Western District Amish Mennonite Conference. The conference met in 1891 at West Fairview Church, Seward Co., Nebr., and continued yearly meetings until its merger with the Mennonite conferences in 1921. The notice of the 1891 meeting which appeared in the *Herald* states:

The Amish Mennonite district conference will be held in the Fairview church [Schlegel Church], Seward Co., Nebr., 28th to 31st of May, 1891. All Amish and Old Mennonite bishops, ministers, and deacons, brethren and sisters are cordially invited to be with us on that occasion.³¹

There were seven Nebraska churches who were members of this conference by 1911. Here is the list as taken from the *Western District Amish Mennonite Conference Proceedings* of 1911:

Fast Fairview, Seward County.
West Fairview, Seward County.
Plum Creek, Beemer, Cumming County.

Shickley, Fillmore County.
Julesburg-Lexington, Deuel County.
O'Neill, Holt County.
Wood River, Hall County.

The two conferences, Kansas-Nebraska and Western District Amish Mennonite, remained separate until 1921 when both underwent major revision. Roseland from the Kansas-Nebraska Conference and East Fairview, West Fairview, Shickley, Wood River, Beemer, Chappell, and O'Neill of the Western District along with churches from Iowa joined to form the completely new Iowa-Nebraska Conference. A newly formed Missouri-Kansas Conference included both Mennonite and Amish churches from these two states. The new Iowa-Nebraska Conference contained eight churches from the state of Nebraska at the time of birth in 1921. Since that time one of these has become extinct and two churches, Milford Amish Mennonite and Broken Bow, have been added making the present total of nine churches.

The conference has played an important role for the churches in Nebraska. Faced with many problems of social disintegration and worldly interventions the churches have found an agency to develop common policies. Through conference meetings the ministers and bishops are able to examine the prevailing conditions and formulate ways to meet the ensuing dangers. On various occasions the conference has issued booklets and papers on the accepted policies of the church and in this way have preserved many practices which have made its church strong. Acting as an influence of conservatism it has given guidance to the individual churches.

Church Growth Since 1905:

	1905	13	17	21	25	29	33	37	41	45	49	54
Plum Creek	40	94	91	80	95	114	132	152	144	125	137	134
W. Fairview	40	88	120	134	172	155	169	152	137	176	134	149
E. Fairview	400	323	305	332	400	350	422	449	440	390	380	444
Chappell	50	48	51	47	32	32	67	57	71	65	62	63
Wood River		86	86	104	122	124	122	135	81	52	71	100
Sa'em	95	184	200	215	220	224	258	260	232	200	246	254
Roseland	90	100	86	100	87	60	60	52	40	28	21	19
Broken Bow							19	19	46	50	50	42
Milford							126	127	164	163	170	192

Facts and figures were taken from the *Mennonite Yearbook*, issues of 1905 to 1954.

Footnotes

1 Smith, *The Mennonites of America*, p. 289.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 233.

3 Harry F. Weber, *Centennial History of Mennonites in Illinois* (Scottsdale, Pa., 1931), p. 154.

4 *Herald of Truth*, XV (January, 1878), p. 12.

5 Theodore Schmidt, *The Mennonites of Nebraska* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1933), p. 70.

6 W. W. Cox, *History of Seward County, Nebr.* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1888), p. 189.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 190.

8 Schmidt, p. 67.

9 *Herald of Truth*, XVII (January, 1880), p. 12.

10 *Herald of Truth*, XVII (January, 1880), p. 12.

11 Cox, p. 190, also Smith, *The Mennonites of America*, p. 494.

12 *Herald of Truth*, XVI (February, 1879), p. 31.

13 Schmidt, p. 71.

14 Letter written by John M. Nunemaker of Roseland, published by the *Herald of Truth*, XIX (Sept. 1, 1882), p. 264.

15 Schmidt, p. 72.

16 Mennonite Conference Reports, 1882-1886.

17 Schmidt, p. 70.

18 *Herald of Truth*, XXV (March 1, 1888), p. 72.

19 *Herald of Truth*, XXVI (Nov. 15, 1889), p. 348.

20 Schmidt, p. 71.

21 *Mennonite Yearbook*, 1908 and 1913.

22 The membership statistics and the names of early ministers were taken from the *Mennonite Yearbook*, 1905, 1908, and 1914.

23 *Mennonite Yearbook*, 1913 and 1930.

(Continued on page 7)

History of Wood River Congregation

BY AMMON E. STOLTZFUS

In the year of our Lord 1905 early in the spring of the year a number of families of the Amish Mennonite faith settled in the vicinity of Wood River, Nebr.; among these we find the names of Peter Zehr, John B. Jantzi, David D. Stutzman, and Rule Reily, from Milford, Seward Co., Nebr.; Noah Stutzman, and son William N. Stutzman from Chappell, Nebr. These brethren with their families formed the nucleus of what was to be the future church here.

Nearly all bought farms the same year, land being comparatively cheap here at this time, \$35 to \$45 per acre. In later years these families were joined by others moving in from different localities.

Seemingly these were all industrious people, and prospered financially, but had no church of their faith established here at this time. In this first year of their settlement here Pre. Nick C. Roth, an Amish Mennonite minister of the Gospel and who at this time resided at Julesburg, Colo., a small town located in the extreme northeast part of the state of Colo., visited with the brethren at Wood River, Nebr. With his help a Sunday school was organized in a building called Quaker or Friends Church, which was located about five miles north and one mile east of the town of Wood River, a village of about 750 inhabitants at this time.

The result of this organizing was the choosing of David D. Stutzman to the office of superintendent and John B. Jantzi assistant.

Not long afterward Joseph E. Zimmerman also of Milford, Nebr., who was a comparatively young man, with his family moved here. Soon after this Bishop Joseph Schlegel of the Pleasant View A.M. congregation at Milford, Nebr., came and organized these people into a congregation which was without a resident minister. On Aug. 27, 1906, Bro. Joe E. Zimmerman was ordained to the ministry by Bishop Schlegel, becoming the first ordained minister of this congregation, which now was known as the Wood River A.M. congregation. Preaching and Sunday school were conducted in the German language.

During December, 1907, Ammon E. Stoltzfus, a minister of the Gospel of the A.M. denomination, living at this time near Seldon, Sheridan Co., Kans. (which congregation is perhaps better known as the Decatur Co., Kans., A.M. congregation), visited the church at Wood River, Nebr., and held a few meetings.

In the summer of 1908 the congregation, which had increased in numbers mostly by brethren moving in from other parts of the country, decided to build a house of worship of their own, as the present place of worship, the Friends Church, was not large enough to hold the congrega-

tion acceptably. Accordingly the brethren David D. Stutzman, Peter Bechler, and John B. Jantzi were chosen as a building committee.

After some time a suitable location was found five miles north and one mile west of the town of Wood River, Bro. Peter Beckler giving several acres of land for the purpose, upon which a frame building about 40 x 50 ft. was built. The congregation extended invitations to others of like faith to help in the financing. The donations from other congregations were not large but were gratefully received.

In September, 1908, Bro. Ammon E. Stoltzfus of the Decatur Co., Kans., congregation, after attending the Western A.M. district conference (which was held at Milford, Nebr., again) with his wife, mother, sister, his brother Christ and wife, Katie, visited the Wood River congregation. Also several other ministering brethren, Bishop John C. Birky of Hope-dale, Ill., and Bro. Daniel Orendorff of Flanagan, Ill., visited here at this time, Bro. Orendorff having a daughter, Mrs. Peter Conrad, living here. Some results of this visit were the moving away of several families; Bro. Peter Conrad moving to Henry Co., Iowa, and Bro. Christian Nafziger, son-in-law of Bro. Christian Birky, moving to his former home in Illinois, seemingly to improve their financial condition.

In 1908 Levi C. Schrock, a young man of 22 years, formerly from Middlebury, Ind., more recently from Johnson and Iowa counties, Iowa, came to Hall Co., Nebr., where he became a member of this same congregation. On Dec. 23 of this same year he was united in marriage with Mattie Stutzman, daughter of Peter Stutzman of the Wood River congregation, by Bishop Nicholas E. Roth of Milford, Nebr. After marriage Bro. Schrock farmed in this community for a number of years.

On Feb. 14, 1909, the new church was dedicated, the ministering brethren Levi J. Miller of the Sycamore Grove congregation, Garden City, Mo., and Bishop Nicholas Roth of the East Fairview congregation, Milford, Nebr., conducting the services, which were in the German language.

As reported Ira Stutzman, son of David D. Stutzman, was one of the first converts received into the congregation by water baptism.

In February, 1910, Abram D. Stutzman, son of David E. Stutzman, who was at this time living near Milford, Nebr., moved with his family to Wood River. Bro. Abram was born in Holmes Co., Ohio, Jan. 13, 1879, and was seven years old when his parents moved to Milford, Nebr., where in his youth he joined church, and later was married to Sarah,

daughter of William and Katie Miller also of Milford, Nebr. As stated before Bro. Abram moved into the vicinity of Wood River, but remained here only a little more than a year, when on Aug. 1, 1911, he returned with his family to Milford. At this time the Wood River congregation had increased in membership to somewhere between 75 and 100 and seemingly prospered both financially and spiritually.

Early in February, 1910, Bro. Ammon E. Stoltzfus, who was still serving the Decatur Co., Kans., congregation and to whom had been extended several invitations to move to the Wood River congregation, received a letter from several brethren informing him of a farm for rent in that vicinity. Bro. Stoltzfus accordingly made arrangements, and on March 16 of this same year, moved with his wife, six children, his sister Sarah, brother Daniel, and his widowed mother, Lydia, into the vicinity of Wood River. Bro. Stoltzfus was born near Lewisburg, Union Co., Pa., on Dec. 20, 1872, and when he was 10 years old moved with his parents to Robinson, Brown Co., Kans. Because of no church of the A.M. faith being established at this place, after three years his parents moved to Lyon Co., Kans., where at that time a prosperous little congregation of the A.M. faith had been started only a few years previous to this. However, after three years' residence here, his parents moved to Decatur Co., Kans., where land was very cheap, and where church privileges were equally good, a congregation of the A.M. faith having been established several years earlier. Here Bro. Ammon was converted, and received into church fellowship by Bishop Schlegel. Oct. 8, 1895, he was united in marriage with Elisabeth Schrock, oldest daughter of Christian C. and Katie Schrock, who formerly were from Ranoke, Ill. Bishop John C. Birky officiated at the marriage. On June 27, 1897, God chose Bro. Ammon from the congregation, being yet less than 25 years old, to preach the Gospel, and prior to this having only a few months of active service in the congregation as Sunday school superintendent, and with only a meager common school education. Bro. Stoltzfus preached altogether in the German language for a number of years and at the time of his coming to Wood River in 1910 services here were being conducted in this language and continued for a number of years.

Bishop Joseph Schlegel was serving here at this time, and so continued until the time of his passing to his eternal reward, which occurred on Dec. 25, 1913. After his decease the congregation here was supplied with bishop oversight from the Shickley, Nebr., congregation. Bishop Peter Kennel, Sr., administering to the needs of the people.

On Dec. 9, 1916, Bro. Joseph E. Zimmerman of this congregation was ordained bishop by Bro. Kennel, and continued to

give good service to the congregation until the spring of 1920 when he with his family moved to Milford, Nebr., to serve the East Fairview congregation, which at this time was without a resident bishop. For a number of years before his moving away, the congregation here had arranged to have some services in the English language, also song service was frequently enjoyed, Bro. Daniel B. Boshart being fairly well versed in teaching of the same.

As stated before Bro. Abram D. Stutzman had moved to his former home at Milford in 1911. In October, 1912, he was ordained to the office of deacon in the East Fairview congregation, by Bishop Joseph Schlegel, where he served the church there in that office until in March, 1916, when he again moved with his family to Wood River, where he is serving the congregation at this time (1932).

After Bishop Zimmerman's moving away in 1920 the congregation here was left without a resident bishop. Therefore Bishop Kennel of Shickley was again appointed to look after the needs of the congregation here, which he continued to do until a few years after the merging of the conference districts, when Bro. D. G. Lapp of the Roseland, Nebr., congregation was appointed by conference to the bishop oversight, which continued for about five years.

Previous to, and during, Bro. Lapp's serving here, the congregation had been passing through serious difficulties, which consisted mainly of worldliness and modernism creeping in. The ministering brethren at this time were Bro. A. E. Stoltzfus, minister, Bros. A. D. Stutzman and L. C. Schrock deacons. Bro. Schrock, in 1916, had moved to the Chappell, Nebr., congregation, and in April, 1918, moved with his family to Thurman, Colo., where he was ordained to the office of deacon on May 18, 1918, by bishops Zimmerman and Kennel, the former from Milford, Nebr., the latter from Shickley, Nebr. Bro. Schrock was ordained to the office of deacon and to preach the Word when called upon to do so. In 1921 Bro. Schrock with his family again moved from Colorado to Wood River, where he had formerly been located.

Before the year 1921 and nearly every year since, Bible conference work has been done by many brethren from different localities, some of whom we shall name: C. A. Hartzler, Isaac Hartzler, S. E. Allgyer, Silas Weldy, C. Z. Yoder, Sanford Yoder, John W. Hess, and Levi J. Miller; sometimes series of meetings were held by brethren from different localities. A few are E. J. Berkey, John W. Hess, and B. B. King.

In the fall of 1927 it was the privilege of the Wood River congregation to have the Iowa-Nebr., district conference meet with them, which was the first time conference was ever held in this congregation. This was a great help spiritually; as stated previously in these pages, in years

gone by the congregation had had various difficulties to contend with.

After this conference a committee of three bishops was appointed to investigate and advise the congregation, which seemingly has worked for the good of all concerned. Sometime after this there were a few members of the A.M. that located at Broken Bow, Nebr., but were without a preacher. For a number of years the ministers at Wood River supplied preaching services for these. In the spring of 1929 Bro. L. C. Schrock was chosen from the Wood River congregation to take charge of the members at Broken Bow, which he proceeded to do by moving there. In October of this same year his life companion was called to her eternal reward. Bro. Schrock continued a number of months at Broken Bow then in the summer of 1930 he returned to the Wood River vicinity where he labored by the day for a few months, after which he went

to Iowa Co., Iowa, the place of his boyhood days, where in December, 1930, he was united in marriage with Sister Vera E. Gingerich by John Y. Swartzendruber. He is now located with the Lower Deer Creek congregation.

Bishop Zimmerman at this time (1932) is serving the Wood River congregation, which for a number of years past has been holding a membership of about 120 with Bro. Ammon E. Stoltzfus as minister and Bro. Abram D. Stutzman as deacon. Sunday school and preaching services are held weekly, Bible reading every two weeks in the evening, on alternate Sunday evenings singing and Scripture repeating is practiced. Bible conference is held annually, also evangelistic meetings held when opportunity affords. Mission offerings are held every Sunday with a number of special offerings during the year. A sewing circle has been organized for a number of years.

The Meyer or Moyer Family

BY ALLEN M. FRETZ, Souderton, Pa.

To write the history of a family so numerous in its membership, so complex in its connections and so widely scattered in its habitations as the family named above, would indeed be quite a task. It would require more space than *The Pennsylvania-German* could afford to give, or the patience of the reader would suffice to peruse. Consequently this article is a mere fragmentary sketch of a very numerous family, that has done much in the way of building up and advancing the interests, both temporal and spiritual, of this and adjoining counties, as well as the country they made their own for the sake of liberty of conscience.

Early Immigrants—Name Spelled Variously

In the opening years of the eighteenth century, when religious intolerance and persecution drove many from the fatherland to seek homes on this side of the Atlantic, in the land then already known as a refuge for the oppressed and destined by the Almighty to become the land of religious toleration, of liberty and material progress—then, among the many German families that came to the forestland of Penn the Friend, the friend especially of the Mennonites, whom he had already helped to found a permanent settlement several miles north of his own town of "Brotherly Love," was the Meyer family. This representative family, which has become very numerous in its descendants and now shows a number of variations in the spelling of its name, was among the first settlers of the district comprising the townships of Franconia and the Salfords, in Montgomery, then a part of Philadelphia County. The immigration of families by the name of Meyer was not, however, confined to that period, for we find that other settlers bearing this name came to this and other parts of the country at

later dates. Even at this day it is not uncommon to find immigrants of German or other nationality bearing the name Meyer or some variation of it. The variation of spelling is common even in the fatherland today. While the variations there may possibly represent different families, we find that here members of the same family have taken to the discordant trait of spelling their names differently. In the Palatinate the name is invariably spelled *Meyer*, while in other parts of Germany—especially in Württemberg—in Switzerland, in the Netherlands and the British Isles, the variations are used. This fact points to the conclusion, in the mind of the writer, that the original home of the family, at least of that part with which this sketch has to do, is the Palatinate, and that the correct spelling of its name is *Meyer* or *Meier*.

There were two ancestors by the name of Meyer that settled close together. Whether they were brothers and whether they came together, are questions we are at this time not able to decide. Their names were Christ'an and Hans.

Descendants of Christian Meyer

Christian Meyer, the progenitor of a great part of the very many Moyers, Mverses, etc., in Montgomery, Bucks, and adjoining counties of Pennsylvania, in other states and Canada, settled in what is now Lower Salford Township. His farm contained 150 acres and lay in the form of a parallelogram, extending from near the present North Wales and Sumneytown pike northeastward along the present Souderton pike to the line of Franconia township. There has been preserved a description of a cabin then and there erected by him, which was probably the first Meyer home in the Western world. It was built where Lewis Moyer of the eighth generation now lives. It consisted

of four forked saplings driven into the ground as cornerposts with a closed-up roof and sides framed with poles and a single opening as a door; the whole was constructed with an ax. An article of furniture which probably adorned this primitive home was a large clock brought from the old country. This one of his descendants took to Canada in the emigration of 1799-1800, and it is now owned by Rev. H. D. Moyer, of Kingsville, Ont., of the seventh generation.

This ancestor Christian Meyer had six children: Christian, Jacob, Samuel, Elizabeth, Anna, and Barbara. Many of their descendants are now living in the townships of Franconia and the Salfords, in Souderton and other towns in Montgomery County; in Hilltown and Perkaspie, Bucks County, and a host of them in Canada, from where they have again spread to other parts of the country.

Christian Meyer II, the oldest son of the like-named pioneer, has the greatest number of descendants, most of the Moyers of Hilltown, and some of the Meyers of Bedminster and Plumstead, Bucks County, being among them. This family is still largely Mennonite, and is especially noted for the great number of ministers among its members, not only in the Mennonite Church, but also in other denominations.

The other children of the pioneer Christian have fewer descendants. Jacob had no family. Samuel was married, but had no children. Elizabeth married Nicholas Oblinger; of her descendants the writer has no information. Anna married Rev. Henry Funk, the pioneer of the Funk family; her descendants are numerous. Barbara married Abraham Reiff; of this family there are many in Montgomery County.

Christian Meyer III, son of Christian II, inherited from his grandfather a hundred acres of the old homestead, as before described. He had fourteen children. Some of these had large families. Most of them lived in Montgomery and count among their progeny, beside Moyers, members of the Alderfer, Markley, Harley, Cassel, Allebach, Steiner, Souder, Krupp, Hunsberger, Kulp and other well-known families of the county.

Jacob, Christian's brother, had nine children. He with his family moved to Hilltown, where he was a minister in the Mennonite Church. He and his wife both died of yellow fever, leaving a family of minor children. Of these Agnes, who had married a Mr. Hunsberger, and her brothers Samuel and David, with their families, emigrated to Canada in 1800 from near Blooming Glen.

Rev. Samuel Meyer, another brother of Christian Meyer III, had nine children and also lived in Hilltown. Two of his sons, Rev. Jacob Meyer and Dilman Meyer, and their families were in the company that emigrated to Canada.

Meyers Emigrating to Canada

Of the exodus of the Meyer family to

Canada the following interesting account by Jacob Albright, one of the party, has been preserved:

During the summer of 1799, Amos Albright, Abraham Meyer, and Jacob Meyer traveled on foot from Hilltown, Pa., to the Niagara district, in upper Canada, on a prospecting tour. They were so well pleased with the country that before returning they purchased 1,100 acres of land in what is now the garden-spot of Canada, at prices ranging from \$1.50 to \$2.50 per acre. A deposit of \$40 secured the purchase, and they walked back to their Pennsylvania homes. The same autumn they removed to the new land of promise with all their portable belongings. The party consisted of the following: Rev. Jacob Meyer, Dilman Meyer, Valentine Kratz, John Hunsberger, Abraham Hunsberger, and Amos Albright and their families. Each family had with them a four-horse team and a cow; with one exception the cows were all shod. Their journey, for a great part of the way, was through an unbroken wilderness, and when night overtook them they would build campfires. At Black Rock (Buffalo) they crossed the Niagara on a small ferryboat and then proceeded to their new wilderness home. These immigrants from southeastern Pennsylvania planted the Mennonite Church in Canada.

The following year a second party of Pennsylvanians, consisting of about 60 persons with eleven teams, mostly of four horses each, betook themselves to this Canadian settlement. Among them were Samuel Meyer and Daniel Meyer with their families. The journey took seven weeks and involved much hardship.

Descendants of Hans Meyer

Hans Meyer, the other pioneer of the family that settled in Montgomery County, was probably a brother of Christian, but we have nothing definite about it. If he was a brother, he probably came with him to this country in the second decade of the eighteenth century. His land, estimated at 216 acres, was purchased under deed bearing date July 23, 1729, given by Isaac Pennington and Casper Wistar. It was situated in what is now Upper Salford Township, on the northwest side of the East Branch of the Perkiomen, about one mile northeast of Bergey post office, formerly Branchville. It is owned in part and occupied by a great-great-grandson, Jacob L. Moyer. The barn built by Henry, son of Hans, in 1787 is still in good condition.

Hans Meyer had seven children, as follows: Henry, John, Barbara, Jacob, Elizabeth, Anna, Hester.

Of these sons Henry has the most numerous descendants, perpetuating the family name in its original spelling, though they have also in some instances made the mistake of dropping the *e* before the *y* and in many cases added an *s* to the end of the name. This Henry was born in the old country, and was about a year old when his parents arrived. It is said he

learned to walk on shipboard. He inherited the homestead. He and his wife were among the original members of the Franconia Mennonite Church. We find in this Hans Meyer family an early proclivity to move to Bucks County; and while the descendants of pioneer Christian moved eastward to Hilltown, also to Canada and other places, and changed the family name, the descendants of Hans went farther eastward, to Bedminster, Tinicum and Plumstead, adhering more closely to the German spelling of their name.

John, another son of Hans Meyer, came while young to Bedminster Township, had a farm near Pipersville, and later moved to Plumstead Township where many of his descendants are still living, most of them writing their name Myers. Barbara, the oldest daughter, became the wife of John Fretz, of Bedminster, the pioneer of that numerous family, and the ancestral mother of the writer. Jacob enlisted in the army in 1756 and disappeared, according to our records. Elizabeth married Christian Stover, of Bedminster; she has numerous descendants. Hester married Nicholas Lear, of Providence, Pa. Anna married Jacob Beidler, of Milford, Bucks County.

While Henry Meyer, as before mentioned, held to the homestead on the "Branch," his son Henry, following the example of his uncles and aunts, moved to Plumstead, Bucks County, and has numerous descendants. His two sons John and Henry drove teams between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, and on one of their trips in 1823 John was taken sick and died. Henry buried him, and in a few days he also was taken sick and died.

The first-mentioned Henry Meyer's son Jacob married Maria Clemmer and made his home nearer the old homestead. His descendants are Movers, while John, who married Catharine Souder, following too the example of most of his relatives, had a farm on the Durham road in Bedminster, near Pipersville, where his descendants—named Meyers and Myers—are numerous. He was a great-grandfather on the maternal side of the writer. This John Meyer's second wife was Judith Fretz. She was the mother of ten of the fifteen children born in this family. Isaac, another brother, also lived in Bedminster and has descendants. Barbara, a sister, married John Wisler and lived in Haycock Township. Her descendants are found among the following Bucks County families: Wisler, Krout, Lapp, Leatherman, Shelly, etc. Christian married—Bergey; his descendants are also mostly in Bucks County, and write their name variously. Samuel, the youngest son of Henry, son of the pioneer Hans Meyer, resided on the old homestead; hence his descendants, which are living in that vicinity, write their name Moyer.

Other Branches of the Family

Having thus briefly sketched the history of two of the pioneers of this numerous family, it must not be forgotten that the

Meyer and Moyer families of this country are not all descended from these. We would have to look for their connection further back than the time of immigration of these two ancestors. In 1741 Rev. Peter Meyer with three brothers, one sister, and their mother came to America and settled in Springfield, Bucks County, and Saucon, now Lehigh County. All these were farmers and members of the Mennonite Church. They came from Switzerland, where Peter was a minister. He was one of the early ministers in the Springfield church. Jacob was also a minister and preached in the Saucon church. From the original places of settlement of these brothers, their descendants have spread over the country, and we find them mixed up with the descendants of the other pioneers, with the same variations of spelling the name.

John, son of Peter Meyer, born in Springfield, Bucks County, married Elizabeth Detweiler and moved to the old Detweiler homestead in Montgomery County. The house was a large log cabin built before the Revolution, and was used as a meetinghouse before the Franconia meetinghouse was built. His descendants are numerous and prominent throughout Montgomery County. The descendants of the other children of Peter, as well as those of his brothers and sister, are mostly confined to the upper end of Bucks and Montgomery and to Berks and Lehigh counties. Many descendants of all these families have gone westward, and are prominent in their various vocations of life in other states. While they are the best of farmers, many have become prominent in the professions and in legislative halls.—*The Pennsylvania-German*, October, 1905.

MENNONITE CHURCH IN NEBRASKA

(Continued from page 3)

24 Letter written by P. P. Hershberger, published by the *Herald of Truth*, XX (Dec. 15, 1883), p. 376.

25 Settlers' origin and land conditions taken from a letter published in the *Herald of Truth*, XXVI (Dec. 15, 1889), p. 378.

26 Membership figures from *Mennonite Yearbook*, 1920 through 1930, and 1944.

27 *Herald of Truth*, XXVII (June 1, 1890), p. 170.

28 Weaver, William B., *History of the Central Conference Mennonite Church* (Danvers, Ill., 1926), p. 90.

29 Date and place of conference taken from *Mennonite Conference Record* (1914), p. 5.

30 *Herald of Truth*, XIX (Aug. 15, 1882), p. 249.

31 *Herald of Truth*, XXVIII (May 15, 1891), p. 157.

Conference Historian Called Home

Ezra Stauffer, Historian for the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference, and member of the Mennonite Publication Board, passed to his reward on Aug. 1, 1955.

He was the youngest son of Joseph R. and Mattie (Bender) Stauffer, was born near Milford, Nebr., Feb. 15, 1898, and passed away after a heart attack near his home, Tofield, Alta., on Aug. 1, 1955; aged 57 y. 5 m. 17 d. He was afflicted with a heart condition since the spring of 1950.

In his early youth he accepted Christ as his Saviour and became a member of the Salem Amish Mennonite Church near Tofield to which he remained faithful to the end. On Aug. 20, 1920, he was married to Irene Lehman. To this union were born 2 sons and 3 daughters. His first companion and two small daughters preceded him in death. On April 6, 1949, he was married to Stella Good Huber. To this union was born one daughter (Ruth Ann). He leaves to mourn his departure his wife, 2 sons (Joseph Robert and James Leroy), 2 daughters (Beulah Mary—Mrs. John A. Hostetler, and Ruth Ann), 4 grandchildren, 2 sisters (Mrs. Lena Reil and Mrs. Dave Yoder of Tofield), and a large circle of relatives and friends. Four

sisters and one brother preceded him in death the past six years.

He served in the capacity of superintendent of Sunday school for many years, and was always interested in holding children's meetings. He was a member of the Publication Board for 10 years, served as teacher in winter Bible schools for many years, having special interest in the teaching of prophecy, and served as Conference Historian for 20 years. During this time he collected a great deal of historical data relative to the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference, and kept a journal of important events in the life of the church. It was his hope that this material be published in book form at some future date. One of his unpublished manuscripts, the biography of Bishop N. E. Roth, is published in this issue. He was ordained to the ministry at Carstairs, Alta., on June 23, 1945. After serving Carstairs congregation for several years, he again moved to the Tofield district where he resided until his death.

Funeral services were held at the Salem Mennonite Church on Aug. 5 with J. B. Stauffer, M. D. Stutzman, Paul Voegtlin, Stanley Shantz, and Clarence Ramer in charge. Interment was made in the cemetery nearby.

Memories of John S. Coffman

BY J. R. SHANK

My earliest recollection of Bro. J. S. Coffman was about the year 1833 when I was a boy about 6 years old. Bro. Coffman was a boyhood associate of my father, Lewis H. Shank. As a member of the Mt. Zion congregation near Versailles, Mo., my father became concerned to have some special meetings by an experienced evangelist. He discussed the advisability of making a call for Bro. Coffman, of whom he had heard that God's blessing was attending his efforts in the evangelistic field. The ministry at Mt. Zion agreed and the call was made. He came in the fall of 1833. I have a distinct recollection of the baptismal service at the close of those meetings. I may not be able to name all who were baptized, but I recall the names of some of my aunts and cousins: Priscilla Wenger; Lizzie and Catharine Shank; Ida and Emma Driver. Others I would know but am not so sure as to whether it was at this time, or some other, that they came. At this time sister Mollie (4 yrs.) and I distinctly remember Bro. Coffman's concern and warm friendship with children of our age.

The next year after this event, my father, seeking a better farm, sold out and moved from Missouri to Kansas. Not

finding the new location to his liking he took the opportunity to trade his Kansas farm for a place in Johnson Co., Mo., not far from Leeton. This was in the year 1836. In this locality he was isolated from the church of his choice (Mennonite), with his family. When my oldest sister, Sallie, came to the age of accountability, she had responded to confess Christ in a YMCA meeting while at a normal school in Warrensburg, Mo. This led my father to call for Bro. Coffman again. He came to us in the fall of 1890 when I was 13 years of age. Bro. Coffman came and held a series of meetings; and at its close instructed and baptized the converts. These were my sister Sallie and Joe C. Driver, who at that time was at home with us as he helped in the farming business with my father. When Bro. Coffman bade me "Good-by," he said, "As fast as you learn what is right, do it." I already had serious thoughts, but hardly thought myself of sufficient maturity to be received in baptism.

My mother had already contracted the disease of tuberculosis. And my father, concerned for her physical well-being, was persuaded to sell his home and take my mother to the state of Florida. This move

took place in the year 1891. Uncle John Wenger, my mother's brother, formerly of Versailles, Mo., had already spent a period of time in Bowling Green, Fla., on account of the same disease. He had seemingly received much benefit. Father left me and Mollie, and Josephus, and Emma, with uncles and aunts in Morgan Co., Mo., while he took the younger ones, Charles and Fannie, with them to Florida. This was in 1892. The following year he sent for us and sister Sallie, who at this time had spent the school year at Warrensburg, Mo. Father and Mother lived in a small house in Bowling Green. He bought another tract and built a home more suited to our needs. He hoped that Mother would stand the climate better than farther north.

In the year 1894 while my mother was yet quite poorly, we obtained a farm with an orange grove in the country some eight miles distant. Here my mother soon passed away and left us motherless. Sister Sallie had by this time been married to D. L. Mohler, so that it left the burden of responsibility upon sister Mollie to lead in the housekeeping. This responsibility became a burden on her heart when she felt the responsibility of rightly leading her younger brothers and sisters. (Sister Rose was born in Florida.) She talked with Father about her burden and expressed a desire to accept Christ as her Saviour. Father was not sure of her understanding, but he wrote to Bro. J. S. Coffman of his problem and requested him to make a visit to us. Bro. Coffman came and began the meetings in our home. He had family worship in our home, and preached with the presence of neighbors at night. Later he was invited to preach in a nearby church that had been built by Baptists but was not being used.

It was at this time that I was moved to express, in one meeting, that "I have thought that I ought to be a Christian." In the next meeting, when a number had confessed their Saviour, in response to a sermon on the need of confessing Christ before men, I also was moved to say that "I want to confess Christ for the first time." These beginnings led me on to a clearer understanding, and I was ready to seal my vows in water baptism. After a service in the church house we went to the little shallow brook nearby, where sister Mollie and I were baptized by Bro. Coffman in the presence of a number of neighbors and friends.

These memories have impressed me, as well as others who know of them. Bro. Coffman had traveled hundreds of miles in the lifetime of our father's family for the express purpose of serving the spiritual needs in our home. He made the trip to Florida for the express purpose of contacting two Mennonite families in that state. These families were isolated from each other and from the church of their choice. The other family was that of Isaac Plank, father of David of Detroit, Mich., and grandfather of Marvin Plank

of Scottdale, Pa. My heart is filled with gratitude when I know that a man of God was willing to travel the distance from Elkhart, Ind., to Florida with no prospect of gathering in more than a few. When I know that he was often accustomed to meet with large audiences and could expect larger responses to his preaching, I thank God again for the vision it gives of God's grace toward a needy soul in any circumstance of life. These experiences and memories, through the years, beginning in childhood and intensified in my conversion, and in later years, have

brought a conviction that I should serve the Lord and work with smaller groups of neglected ones. It should be no pain to work with needy souls anywhere who are in need of the Gospel message.

"Let us labor for the Master from the dawn till setting sun,
Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care;
Then when all of life is over, and our work on earth is done,
And the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there."

New Edition of Complete Writings of Menno Simons

BY JOHN C. WENGER

Four hundred and twenty years ago, on January 30, 1536, Menno Simons renounced his Roman faith and stepped into the ranks of a small group of evangelical Christians called Anabaptists.

Menno Simons was born about 1495. He lived for a few years in the area of Amsterdam, then after a brief period in East Friesland he located in the Rhineland, in the bishopric of Cologne from 1544 to 1546. Most of the last fifteen years of his life was spent in Holstein in northern Germany near the Baltic at a place called Wuestenfelde. He died in 1561.

The release of this new edition marks the completion of ten years of planning and translating and publishing.

The first major collection of Menno's Dutch books was printed in Holland in 1601. A better edition was issued in 1646, and the large standard *Opera* in 1681 at Amsterdam. The English so-called *Complete Works* of Menno was published at Elkhart, Indiana, in 1871, and at the same place the German companion volume appeared in 1881.

No previous edition of Menno's writings, either Dutch, German, or English, was really complete, none was critically prepared, and none contained a biography of the Reformer Menno Simons.

The new book is a complete new translation from the Dutch language and from the dialect in which Menno spoke and wrote. The translator is Leonard Verduin, linguist and theologian of Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Dean Harold S. Bender, of the Goshen College Biblical Seminary, revised his 1936 biography of Menno Simons for inclusion in the volume.

J. C. Wenger, Professor of Theology in the Goshen College Biblical Seminary, and author of a number of books on Mennonite history and theology, is editor of the *Complete Writings*.

The twenty-five separate tracts and books are arranged in chronological order. Also in the new edition are fifteen letters or parts of letters extant, as well as the two hymns.

The editor of the volume wrote editorial introductions to each of the different writings, giving the background, time of writing, full title in the Dutch, and a brief summary of the contents of each book. Also prepared for the first time is a twenty-page index of the entire volume. The new edition contains six letters which never appeared in any collection of Menno's writings before, as well as a tract, "Meditations and Prayers for Mealtime," and two hymns.

Menno had a sound view of the Scriptures, the Trinity, the new birth, holiness of life, divine grace, God's keeping power, the need of perseverance in faith and obedience, the doctrine of love and non-resistance, Christian separation and non-conformity to the world, the baptism of believers only, the rejection of all oaths, and the necessity of obeying literally every New Testament command. It is right that the church he served should be called Mennonite.

The 1956 publication contains eight illustrations, among them a photographic reproduction of the only extant letter in Menno's handwriting located in the Dutch Doopsgezinde Archives in Amsterdam, Holland.

In all his writings Menno has much to say of the commitments of baptism (he rejected the baptism of infants), of the new birth, of the necessity of earnest Christian discipleship, of the importance of church discipline, of the right to freedom of conscience, of the spirit of peace and love which should characterize disciples of Jesus, and of the absolute importance of aligning all life and doctrine with the teaching of the Scriptures interpreted Christologically.

The publisher is releasing this major work on January 30, 1956, exactly four hundred and twenty years after Menno's renunciation of the Church of Rome. The book is well printed, handsomely bound, contains over 1,100 pages, and sells for \$8.75. It is available at local bookstores, or from the publisher, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania.

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No. 2

Pennsylvania German Culture

By Arthur D. Graeff and
John A. Hostetler

The ethnic group, known as "Pennsylvania German," popularly known as "Pennsylvania Dutch" (from Deutsch), has left an indelible impress upon the American way of life. The Pennsylvania Germans are a group of people (of Swiss, Alsatian, and Palatine origin) who earlier shared and still share to a certain extent a common High-German Palatine dialect, who settled mostly in Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century and later. Religiously there are three general types of Pennsylvania Dutch: (1) "Church People," so called because the adherents belonged to established state churches (Lutheran and Reformed) when they came to this country; (2) the Moravians; and (3) the "Plain People" (also called Sects).

Among the Plain People (so named because of their plainness in dress) are the Mennonites, Amish, Dunkards or Church of the Brethren, River Brethren, and the Brethren in Christ, and earlier the Schwenkfelder group. The Amish are currently photographed, popularized, and dramatized so much that there is a common mistaken notion that all Pennsylvania Dutchmen are "Plain." The Plain People probably number not more than ten per cent of the total dialect-speaking population of which there are about one-half million in North America who can speak or understand the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect.

The Pennsylvania Germans preserved for themselves many of the finer features of the group culture which they brought with them from the Old World. We shall consider their contributions to the broader scope of American life, and occasionally refer to elements of their ethno-centric culture which, of itself, is a fascinating field for the sociologist.

Agriculture: Few persons will disagree with the statement that the Pennsylvania Dutch people are and always have been among the best farmers in America. Accustomed to the intensive cultivation of their fields they did not adopt the plantation system of the southern states or devote vast acreage to grazing. The farmstead became a fairly self-sufficient economic unit under the husbandry of free men whose ancestors, in many cases, tilled feudal strips on the baron's manor. In

America each farmer established his own manor and became his own master.

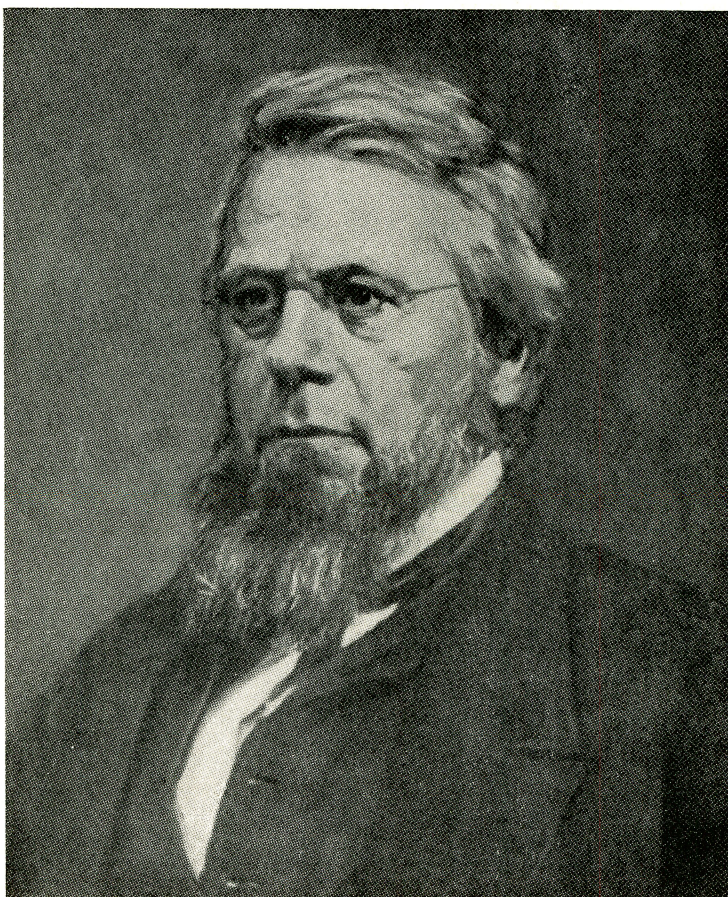
Nature is a stern disciplinarian and those who seek her rewards must learn the disciplines of life. The Mennonites, Amish, and other members of the Plain People have integrated these disciplines with their spiritual and economic life. Usually the Lutheran and Reformed people also held close to basic principles and practices in agriculture.

The Pennsylvania Germans are credited with the introduction of the willow tree,

many varieties of fruit, especially apples, the prevention of soil erosion, the balanced rotation of crops, the building of "bank" barns, the Conestoga wagon, prairie schooner of pioneer days, several types of fences, and numerous other elements found in modern agriculture.

Kitchen Culture: The excellence of Pennsylvania German cooking is acknowledged by most people. Housewives in Pennsylvania are kitchen chemists, little concerned with such matters as calories and vitamins but ever alert to the virtues of cleanliness, taste, and the complete banishment of hunger from the domains over which they rule. A list of culinary delights which bear the mark

(Continued on page 4)



HEINRICH HARBAUGH (1817-67)
Author of HARBAUGH'S HARFE (published by the Reformed Church, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, 1902) and author of the "HEEMWEH" in this issue.

Heemweh

BY HEINRICH HARBAUGH, 1817-67

Ich wees net was die Ursach is—
Wees net, warum ich's dhu:
'N jedes Johr mach ich der Weg
Der alte Heemet zu;
Hab weiter nix zu suche dort—
Kee' Erbschaft un kee' Geld'
Un doch treibt mich des Heemgefiel
So schtark wie alle Welt;
Nor'd schtärt ich ewe ad un geh,
Wie owe schun gemeldt.

Wie nächer dass ich kumm zum Ziel,
Wie schtärker will ich geh,
For eppes in mei'm Herz werd letz
Un dhut m'r kreislich weh.
Der letschte Hiwel schpring ich nuf,
Un ep ich drowe bin,
Schtreck ich mich uf so hoch ich kann
Un guk mit Luschte hin;
Ich seh's alt Schtee'haus dorch die Beem,
Un wott ich wär schun drin.

Guk, wie der Kicheschornschee' schmokt,
Wie oft hab ich sell g'seh',
Wann ich draus in de Felder war,
'N Buwele jung un klee'.
O, sehntsch die Fenschterscheiwe dort?
Sie guk'n roth wie Blut;
Hab oft cunsiddert, doch net g'wisst,
Dass sell die Sunn so dhut.
Ja, manches wees 'n Kind noch net—
Wann's dhut, wär's ah net gut!

Wie gleich ich selle Babble Beem,
Sie schtehn wie Brieder dar;
Un uf'm Gippel—g'wiss ich leb!
Hockt alleweil'n Schtarr.
'S Gippel biegt sich—guk, wie's gaunscht,
'R hebt sich awer fescht;
Ich seh sei' rothe Fliegle plehn,
Wann er sei' Feddere wescht;
Will wette, dass sei' Fraale hot
Uf sellem Baam 'n Nescht!

O, es gedenkt m'r noch gans gut,
Wo selle werri Beem
Net greeser als 'n Welschkornschock
Bebrocht sin worre heem.
Die Mammi war an's Grändäd's g'west,
Dort ware Beem wie die;
Drei Wipplein hot sie mitgebrocht,
Un g'sa't: Dort blanscht sie hie."
M'r hen's gedhu'—un glaabscht du's nau—
Dort selli Beem sin sie!

Guk! werklich, ich bin schier am Haus!—
Wie schnell geht doch die Zeit!
Wann m'r so in Gedanke geht,
So wees m'r net wie weit.
Dort is d'r Schap, die Welschkornkrip,
Die Seiderpress dort draus;
Dort is die Scheier, un dort die Schpring-
Frisch guellt des Wasser raus;

Un guk! die sehm alt Klapbord-Fens,
Un's Dheerle vor'm Haus.

Alles is schtill—sie wisse net,
Dass epper fremmes kummt.
Ich denk, der alte Watsch is dodt,
Sunscht wär er raus gedschumpt;
For er hot als verschinnert g'brillt
Wann er hot 's Dheerle g'heert;
Es war de Träw'lers kreislich bang,
Sie werre gans verzehrt:
Kee G'fohr—er hot paar Mol gegauzt,
Nor'd is er umgekehrt.

Alles is schtill—die Dheer is zu!
Ich schteh, besinne mich!
Es rappelt doch en wenig nau
Dort hinne in der Kich.
Ich geh net nei—ich kann noch net!
Mei' Merz fiehlt schwer un krank;
Ich geh 'n wenig uf die Bortsch,
Un hock mich uf die Bank;
Es seht mich niemand, wann ich heil,
Hinner der Drauwerank!

Zwee Blätz sin do uf däre Bortsch,
Die halt ich hoch in Acht,
Bis meines Lebens Sonn versinkt
In schtiller Dodes-Nacht!
Wo ich vum alte Vaterhaus
'S erscht mol bin gange fort,
Schtand mei' Mammi weinend da,
An sellem Rigel dort;
Un nix is mir so heilig nau
Als grade seller Ort.

Ich kann se heit noch sehne schteh,
Ihr Schnuppduch in d'r Hand;
Die Backe roth, die Aage nass—
O, wie sie doch do schtand!
Dort gab ich ihr mei' Färewell,
Ich weinte als ich's gab,
'S war's letschte Mol in däre Welt,
Dass ich's ihr gewe hab!
Befor ich widder kumme bin
War sie in ihrem Grab!

Nau, wann ich an mei' Mammi denk,
Un meen, ich dhut se seh,
So schteht sie an dem Rigel dort
Un weint, weil ich wek geh!
Ich seh sie net im Schockelschtuhl!
Net an keem annere Ort;
Ich denk net an sie als im Grab:
Juscht an dem Rigel dort!
Dort schteht sie immer vor mei'm Herz
Un weint noch liebeich fort!

Was macht's dass ich so dort hi' guk,
An sell End vun der Bank!
Weescht du's? Mei' Herz is noch net
dodt,

Ich wees es, Gott sei Dank!
Wie manchmal sass mei Dady dort,
Am Summer-Nochmiddag,
Die Hände uf der Schoos gekreuzt,
Sei Schtock bei Seite lag.
Was hot er dort im Schtille g'denkt?
Wer mecht es wisse—sag?

V'rleicht is es'n Kindheets-Draam,
Dass ihn so sanft bewegt;
Oder is er'n Jingling jetz,
Der scheene Plane legt!
Er hebt sei' Aage uf juscht nau
Un gukt weit iwer's Feld;
Er seht v'rleicht d'r Kerchhof dort,
Der schun die Mammi helt!
Er sehnt v'rleicht nooch seiner Ruh
Dort in her bessere Welt!

Ich wees net, soll ich nei' in's Haus,
Ich zitter an d'r Dheer!
Es is wol alles voll inseed,
Un doch is alles leer!
'S is net meh heem, wie's eemol war,
Un kann's ah nimme sei;
Was naus mit unsere Eltere geht
Kummt ewig nimme nei!
Die Freide hot der Dodt gearnt,
Das Trauerdheel is mei'!

So geht's in däre rauhe Welt,
Wo alles muss vergeh!
Ja, in der alte Heemet gar
Fiehlt m'r sich all allee!
O, wann's net vor der Himmel wär,
Mit seiner scheene Ruh,
Dann wär m'r's do schun lang verleedt,
Ich wisse net, was ze dhu.
Doch Hoffnung leichtet meinen Weg
Der ew'gen Heemet zu.

Dort is'n schее', schее' Vaterhaus,
Dort geht m'r nimmeh fort;
Es weint kee' guti Mammi meh'
In sellem Freideort.
Kee' Dady such meh' for 'n Grab,
Wo, was er lieb hat, liegt!
Sell is kee' Elendwelt wie die,
Wo alle Luscht betregt;
Dort hat das Lewe ewiglich
Iwer der Dodt gesiegt.

Dort find m'r, was m'r do verliert,
Un b'halt's in Ewigkeit;
Dort lewe unsre Dodte all.
In Licht un ew'ger Freid!
Wie oft, wann ich in Druwel bin,
Denk ich an selli Ruh,
Un wott, wann's nor Gott's Wille wär,
Ich ging ihr schneller zu;
Doch wart ich bis mei' Schtindle schlägt,
Nor'd sag ich—Welt, adju!
FINIS

Homesickness

TRANS. BY DR. HARBAUGH

I know not what the reason is:
Where'er I dwell or roam,
I make a pilgrimage each year
To my old childhood home.
Have nothing there to give or get—
No legacy, no gold—
Yet by some home-attracting power
I'm evermore controlled:
This is the way the homesick do,
I often have been told.

As nearer to the spot I come
More sweetly am I drawn;
And something in my heart begins
To urge me faster on.
Ere quite I've reached the last hilltop—
You'll smile at me, I ween!—
I stretch myself high as I can,
To catch the view serene—
The dear old stone house through the
trees
With shutters painted green!

See! how the kitchen chimney smokes!
That oftentimes gave me joy;
When, from the fields, that curling cloud
I witnessed as a boy!
And see! the purple windowpanes,
They seem as red as blood.
I often wondered what did that,
But guess it, never could.
Ah, many a thing a child knows not.
Did it, it were not good!

How do I love those poplar trees!
What tall and stately things!
See! on the top of one just now
A starling sits and sings.
He'll fall!—the twig bends with his
weight!
He likes that danger best.
I see the red upon his wings—
Dark shining is the rest.
I ween his little wife has built
On that same tree her nest.

Oh, I remember very well
When those three poplar trees
Not thicker than my finger were,
And could be bent with ease.
My mother was at Grandpa's house,
And trees like these had he;
She brought three scions home, and said,
"Boys, plant them there for me."
Can you believe—they grew so tall
And made the trees you see!
See! really I am near the house;
How short the distance seems!
There is no sense of time when one
Goes musing in his dreams.
There is the shop—the cornerib, too—
The ciderpress—just see!

The barn—the spring with drinking cup
Hung up against the tree.
The yard fence—and the little gate
Just where it used to be.

All, all is still! They know not yet
That there's a stranger near;
I guess old Watch, the dog, is dead,
Or barking, he'd appear.
What fearful bellowsings he made
Whene'er he heard the gate;
The travelers always feared him sore,
He bounced at such a rate;
But though the bark was woeful loud,
The bite was never great!

All, all is still! The door is shut.
I muse with beating heart;
Hark! there's a little rattling now
Back in the kitchen part.
I'll not go in! I cannot yet;
I'm overcome, I fear!
The same old bench here on the porch,
I'll rest a little here.
Behind this grapevine I can hide
The falling of a tear!

Two spots on this old friendly porch
I love, nor can forget,
Till dimly in the night of death
My life's last sun shall set!
When first I left my father's house,
One summer morning bright,
My mother at *that* railing wept
Till I was out of sight!
Now like a holy star that spot
Shines in this world's dull night.

Still, still I see her at that spot,
With handkerchief in hand;
Her cheeks are red—her eyes are wet—
There, there I see her stand!
'Twas there I gave her my good-by,
There, did her blessing crave,
And oh, with what a mother's heart
She that sought blessing gave.
It was the last—ere I returned
She rested in her grave!

When now I call her form to mind,
Wherever I may be,
She still is standing at that rail
And weeping on for me!
She is in no familiar spot,
As oft in former years;
And never to my fancy she
As in her grave appears;
I see her only at that rail,
Bedewed with holy tears.

What draws my eye to yonder spot—
That bench against the wall?

What holy memories cluster there,
My heart still knows them all!
How often sat my father there
On summer afternoon;
Hands meekly crossed upon his lap,
He looked so lost and lone,
As if he saw an empty world,
And hoped to leave it soon.

Doth a return of childhood's joys
Across his spirit gleam?
Or is his fancy busy now
With some loved youthful dream?
He raises now his eyes and looks
On yon hill's sacred crest;
Perhaps he sees the graveyard there
Where Mother's sleep is blest,
And longs to slumber by her side,
In death's last peaceful rest.

All, all is still! I hesitate—
I fain would pass the door,
But fear the pain of missing all
This home contained of yore.
For, ah, it is not what it was,
Though its inmates are kind;
What with our parents once we lose
We nevermore shall find;
Death goes before and reaps the sheaves;
We can but glean behind.

Such is the fate of earthly loves
Where all things die or change,
Yes, even in the homestead here.
I feel alone and strange.
Oh, were it not for yon bright heaven,
With its unchanging rest,
How heavy would our burdens be,
Our life how sore distressed!
But hope illumines our pathway to
The regions of the blest.

That is a lovely Fatherland:
There I shall never roam;
No mother there with tearful eyes,
Shall see me leave that home.
No father there shall seek the grave
Where his beloved lies;
That is no vale of woes like this,
Where all we cherish dies;
The beautiful is permanent
In those unchanging skies.

There we shall find what here we lose,
And keep it evermore;
There we shall join our sainted dead,
What are but gone before.
I'm fain, in lonely hours, to lift
The veil that let them through,
And wish it were God's holy will
To let me pass it too;
Yet patience! till my hour shall come,
To bid the world, Adieu!

(Continued from page 1)

of their acts is too long to append here. *The Mennonite Community Cookbook* (published by Winstons and also available from Herald Press, Scottdale, Pa.), by Mary Emma Showalter provides a full fare for those who wish to be initiated. They contributed to our national pantry such delicacies as cottage cheese, scrapple, various types of sausages, pretzels, cole slaw, and, of course, sauerkraut.

Crafts: Handicrafts are the morganatic handmaidens of the finer arts. Every ethnic group has its own peculiar *volkskunde*; that of the Pennsylvania Germans is of special interest because of its expertness and the vestiges of Renaissance lore which survived the centuries, in a new world. Early craftsmen included cabinet-makers whose workmanship is attested to this day by antique collectors, weavers, potters, stonemasons, wheelwrights, wainwrights, carpenters, smiths, millers, coopers, and processors of farm products.

The young lady of the household filled the dower chest (perhaps one made by a relative and decorated by a friend) with linens made of flax which she spun, and embroidered by her nimble fingers. Her mother quilted bed coverings, braided straw for the making of hats, cut and sewed cloth to furnish garments for her family. Some of these handicrafts are still employed on farmsteads in Mennonite-Amish communities. For most persons, however, the decisive victories constantly being won by what historians call the Industrial Revolution, have relegated these practical bits of *Wissenwerth* to history's shelf.

The Finer Arts, Fraktur: A style of broken or fractured letter writing, usually illuminated in brilliant colors, was one of the arts practiced in monasteries by the trained copyists of medieval times. The skills involved and the knowledges of vegetable dyes used, were brought to America by the early Germans. They illuminated their birth certificates, baptismal certificates, *Haus-Sege*n (house blessings), and other documents of record. Itinerant artists wrote statistics on the flyleaves of Bibles and seamstresses designed and applied them to cloth.

This art flourished until 1830 when commercial printing presses began to supply printed forms. Later Currier and Ives attempted to reproduce these forms in color. The invention of four-color printing in the early 1930's made it possible to reproduce these designs in fairly satisfactory color and theme. Since then the general public has become accustomed to all sorts of advertising materials showing hearts, doves, tulips, stars, and *fraktur* lettering in glittering hues. The arts of *fraktur* and illumination are the only forms of folk art transplanted from Europe to American soil.

It should be pointed out here that not all of the church groups participated in the application of designs to the barns, dower chests, chairs, bookmarks, quilts,

tombstones, pottery, etc. The practices were not very common among the Mennonites and Amish who always preferred "plain" living.

After 1830, when the printer, the loom, and the planing mill supplanted the *fraktur* artist, the seamstress, and the cabinet-maker, respectively, the farmers transferred some of these designs to their barns. To break the monotony of color in an 80-foot expanse of red or white painted boards the owner had attractive designs such as stars, teardrops, sun-wheels, etc., painted on barnsides. The credulous, perhaps gullible, persons who know little or nothing of Pennsylvania German culture have accepted the rather sensational version that these barnscapes are "hex" signs, designed to drive away evil spirits, or witches who might otherwise molest the cattle in the barns.

Music: If the musical capitol of the United States had been designated prior to 1830, it would have been located either in Bethlehem or Ephrata, in Pennsylvania. Remembering that the Puritans of New England were prohibited by the tenets of their faith from participating in any kind of music other than humming and that the plantation of the south knew only the spinet and the fiddle, it becomes quite clear that music could develop only in the middle colonies.

The monks at the Ephrata Cloisters wrote more than 600 hymns. Conrad Beisel, the superintendent of the Cloisters, wrote the first book on harmony written in the New World. As early as 1742 the Moravians in Bethlehem rendered *In Dulce Jubilo*. The Brothers and Sisters in Unity (Moravians) composed hundreds of chorales written for their religious festivals. To this day the Bach Festival Chorus at Bethlehem continues as the finest choral group in America.

It was the Pennsylvania Germans who built the first church organs, introduced the trombone, the flute, and various types of horns. They formed the first orchestra, rendered the first symphony, and established singing schools in nearly all communities in which they were settled.

Literature: The literature created by people who use a foreign language does not exist for those who do not understand it. The great mass of German literature created before the triumph of English, circa 1910, is therefore frequently not recognized as a contribution to American life.

Since 1910 all Pennsylvania Germans are completely literate in English and

most of them do their thinking in a framework of English expression. The full impact of their contributions is only now beginning to be felt. Among recent writers whose ancestry dates back to early Germanic immigrants are: Pearl Buck, Lowell Thomas, Bayard Taylor, William Dean Howells, Joyce Kilmer, Alan Seegar, Conrad Richter, Hervy Allen, Neal Swanson, Elsie Singmaster, Joseph Hergesheimer, James Witcomb Riley, Grace Noll Crowell, and others.

A sizable volume of literature, in English, has been produced by Pennsylvania German scholars writing for learned societies devoted to the preservation of their history and lore. The result is that the Pennsylvania Germans are probably the most thoroughly recorded group in all America. No group knows its own history better. Not only have professional groups such as the *German Society of Pennsylvania* (est. 1765); the *Pennsylvania German Society* (est. 1895); and the *Pennsylvania German Folklore Society* (est. 1935) and the Pennsylvania Dutch Folklore Center (est. 1948) produced much of the literature, but many church bodies, notably the Mennonites, Moravians, and Schwenkfelders, have published great masses of literature relating to their own individual history and statements of faith.

Education: In spite of the assertions made by some writers condemning the Pennsylvania Germans for hostility to secular education, the facts prove the opposite to be true. These writers have mistaken the cautions and conservative approach for opposition and benightedness. There are more colleges located in the southeastern segment of Pennsylvania than there are in any similar area in the country; the Language Atlas prepared by Brown University in 1943-44 lists Lancaster, Pennsylvania, as the spot where the best English is being used; nearly all the leaders of public education at the state and federal levels are and have been descendants of Pennsylvania German stock; and the literacy census of 1940 places southeastern Pennsylvania as lowest in the extent of illiteracy in the entire nation.—From the forthcoming *Mennonite Encyclopedia*.

Note: Two books giving a general treatment of the Pennsylvania Dutch (or German) people are: Frederic Klees, *The Pennsylvania Dutch* (Macmillan, 1950), and Ralph Wood, Ed. *The Pennsylvania Germans* (Princeton University Press, 1942). Ed.

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No. 3

Gerrit Roosen's Copy of Menno Simons' Writings

By IRVIN B. HORST

A Mennonite book of more than usual association interest is Gerrit Roosen's copy of Menno Simons' writings, the 1646 Dutch *Opera Menno Symons ofte Groot Sommarie*, preserved in the Schwenckfelder Library at Pennsburg, Pa. Gerrit Roosen, 1612-1711, was a well-known minister and elder of the Flemish Mennonite congregation at Hamburg. He was an influential leader among North German Mennonites and was the author of *Unschuld und Gegenbericht* (Ratzeburg, 1702) and *Christliches Gemüthsgepräch*, the latter a much-printed catechism on both sides of the Atlantic.

Roosen's copy of Menno Simons' writings came into the Schwenckfelder Library from the Samuel W. Pennypacker collection. Dr. Elmer S. Johnson bought it along with many other Anabaptist-Mennonite books at public auction October 26-27, 1920, at Philadelphia. Pennypacker had been an assiduous book collector with a keen eye for valuable items. He purchased the Roosen copy from John F. Funk at Elkhart in 1877 at a time when Funk was in financial difficulties. Pennypacker recorded the provenance of the book on the recto side of the flyleaf immediately preceding the title page:

The first owner of this valuable copy of Menno Simons' works was Gerhard Roosen of Hamburg one of the most noted of the early Mennonite preachers and the author of the "Unschuld und Gegenbericht" "Gemüths Gespräch" and other books.¹ His life by B. K. Roosen was published in 1854 and a sketch with a copper plate portrait may be found in the Dutch edition of Schynns [sic] history of 1743.² He died Nov 20 1711 in his 100th year. He has here made some notes of the greatest interest [...] on the second leaf of the preface he describes minutely the place of Menno's residence. In a note on folio 398 signed by him in 1671 he described a visit made by him with Tobias Govertz van den Wijngaert and Peter Jans Moyer in October 1549 [sic] to the dwelling place of Menno and says he was buried in his own cabbage garden. How the book passed from the possession of the Roosens I do not know but in 1808 Christian Nissely, an Amish Mennonite preacher brought it with him from Hesse Darmstadt to Ohio. Its successive owners were then Johannes Schlabbach, Manasseh and

Johannes M. Yoder the last of whom bought it for 18 cents and sold it to John F. Funk of Elkhart for two dollars. From I bought it in 1877.

Samuel W. Pennypacker
Philada July 6, 1878

There is no evidence in the book itself to support the information about ownership in the 19th century; Pennypacker may have received it orally from John F. Funk.

Roosen's ownership, as Pennypacker observes, is shown by the annotations which occur in his hand. These are three in number, all in Dutch, one of which is signed. The book also contains some brief notes in later Dutch and German hands, but they are not significant, except where they attempt to correct the data given by Roosen. Unfortunately the pages of the book were cropped during the process of rebinding. This does not affect the printed text but cuts into the marginal notes by Roosen. The present binding appears to

be early 19th-century American. In the cases of the first and third notes the cropping cuts away the final lines of the script, while the second note is seriously affected by lateral incision. This second note, which occurs on pages 363-65, consists of comment on Menno's views regarding the ban and shunning. Because practically every line of the script has missing portions no attempt was made to transcribe it.

Pennypacker informed J. G. de Hoop Scheffer, professor and historian at the Mennonite seminary at Amsterdam, of this association copy and sent him a transcription of the first and third notes. De Hoop Scheffer made use of the data in an article on Menno Simons in the *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* for 1881, where John Horsch also noted the information.³ It may be worth while to have these notes in an American source and to provide an English translation of them.

ANNOTATION BY ROOSEN—No. 1

(This note occurs on the verso of signature ***3. The text in parentheses represents alterations made by later hands; the material in brackets is notation by the present editor.)

Original

Menno Symons gebooren in den jaere 1492 (1494 oft int eerste van 1495) tot Witmaerssen een dorp in Vriesslant is a° 1517[?] een predicker monck geworden en (eerste) tot Pinningum [Pingjum] (daerna tot Witmaerssen) in Vriesslant en in den jaere 1531 (1534) oft 1532 wt het paussdom gegaen en het evangelium suyver en rein gepreedicte, als op fol. 473 tot 475 in dit boeck te lessen is, maer is daerom van de Romse gesinde vervolcht, naer syn leeven gestaen, gelt op syn lijf gestelt, also dat hy het ontflicht is, en vast omgesworven soo in Oostvrieslant / in Holstein in Meckelenberg tot Wismer / en ten lasten hem gestelt by Oldeslo in Holsteen, 6 mijl van Hamb-borg, 4 mijl van Lubeck, onder 't gebiet van een Holster eedelman op Vresenborch resideerend / Heeft eygentlyck gewoont in een dorp genoemt 't Woeste velt, daer is hy a° 1559 den 13 Jan [remainder of text fails]

Translation

Menno Simons born in the year 1492 (1494 or in the beginning of 1495) at Witmarsum, a village in Friesland, became a preacher-monk in 1517[?]



Gerrit Roosen, 1612-1711, Flemish Mennonite minister and author at Hamburg, Germany. This portrait etching was made in Holland in the early part of the 18th century, but is an authentic picture of the subject.

(first) at Pingjum (after that at Witmarsum) and in the year 1531 (1534) or 1532 renounced Catholicism and preached the unadulterated and pure gospel, as one can read on pages 473 to 475 in this book, but for this reason was persecuted by the Catholics, risked his life, had money placed on his head, also that he escaped and meanwhile roamed about in East Friesland, in Holstein, in Mecklenburg as far as Wismar, and finally established himself near Oldesloe in Holstein, six miles from Hamburg, four miles from Lübeck, on the territory of a Holstein nobleman who resided at at the Vresenborch, [Menno] actually lived in a village named Wüstenfelde, where he [died] Anno 1559 on the 13th of January.

ANNOTATION BY ROOSEN—No. 3

(This note appears on page 398. The 1646 *Opera* is paginated, not foliated, as one might gather from both Roosen's and Pennypacker's notes. It follows immediately after the last lines of *Een grodelyke onderweys . . . van de excommunicatie (Instruction on Excommunication)* and the first lines refer to this tract.)

Original

onder het eygen gedruckte boecksken staet datum by my M.S. uwer aller dienaer en broeder. A° 1558 den 11 Juny. het leste dat van hem in druck wtgegeven is en A° 1559 (1561) (den 13den January) is hy in den Heer ontslaepen by Oldeslo genaempt het Woeste Velt, gelegen tussen Hamborch en Lubeck, en is daer in syn eygen koolhoff begraven onder een Holstener edelman, die op thuyt Vresenborch woonde. A° 1649 in ocktober ben ick met Tobias Govers van Amsterdam, en Pieter Jansz Moyer van Lyden, byde oudsten wt Hollant, int weeroom comen van Lubeck op de plaets geweest daer hy gewoont heeft en begraven is, oudt 66 jaer. Geschreuen door my Geeritt Roosen 1671 in myn 60 jaer en [remainder of text fails]

Translation

On his own printed book the date appears: by me M.S. the servant and brother of you all, Anno 1558 the 11th of June, the last [book] from him that was published, and Anno 1559 (1561) (on the 13th of January) he died in the Lord at Oldesloe, called Wüstenfelde, and was buried there in his own cabbage garden, on the land of a Holstein nobleman who lived at the house Vresenborch. Anno 1649 in October, I, with Tobias Govertsz from Amsterdam and Peter Jansz Moyer from Leyden, both elders from Holland, came again near Lübeck where he lived and was buried at the age of 66 years. Written by me Geeritt Roosen in my 60th year and

The student of Menno Simons will question the reliability of the data given here by Roosen, both in regard to the vital statistics and *Een grodelyke onderweys* as the last of his published writings. As Roosen indicates elsewhere his own family lived in the Wüstenfelde community

contemporary with Menno and he is therefore in a position to know what happened.⁴ The dates given in these notes agree with those remembered by Menno Simons' daughter as recorded by Pieter Jansz Twisck. However, in 1702, when Roosen published his *Unschuld und Gegenbericht*, he gave the date of Menno's death as January 31, 1561.⁵ Concerning these dates we may have more to say in another note.

¹ Roosen was also the author of *Evangelisches Glaubens-Bekändtniss der Taufgesinneten Christen* (n.p., 1702), and, according to Schyn, also wrote several hymns.

² B. K. Roosen, *Gerhard Roosen* (Hamburg, 1854). Schyn devotes more than a hundred pages to Roosen, recounting his

life, quoting from his works, and printing three poems written at the time of his death, Hermannus Schyn, *Geschiedenis dier Christenen welke in de Vereenigde Nederlanden onder de Protestanten Mennonieten genaamd worden* (Amsterdam, 1743-45), vol. 3, pp. 320-431.

³ J. G. de Hoop Scheffer, "Eenige opmerkingen en mededeelingen betreffende Menno Simons," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen*, Jaargang 1881, pp. 36-39. John Horsch, *Menno Simons* (Scottsdale, Pa.), p. 18.

⁴ See G. Roosen "Wegen des Menno Simons Lebens-Lauff" in the appendix to *Unschuld und Gegenbericht* (Ratzburg, 1702), pp. 97-98.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

April Meeting of the Historical Committee

The Historical Committee of General Conference meets annually. This year the committee, on invitation from Samuel S. Wenger, met at Paradise, Pa. The business meeting was held in the home of Milton H. Espenshade and the noon meal was served by the Wenger family in their home.

Those present were H. S. Bender, Ernest R. Clemens, J. C. Fretz, N. P. Springer (proxy for Melvin Gingerich), J. A. Hostetler, Ira D. Landis, Grant M. Stoltzfus, J. C. Wenger, Samuel S. Wenger, and J. C. Fretz.

The committee's membership of ten is appointed by General Conference. Three were absent: Harold Bauman, Paul Peachey, and Gideon G. Yoder. The committee co-opted two persons, Ernest R. Clemens and J. C. Fretz.

The following officers were elected: H. S. Bender, Chairman; J. C. Wenger, Secretary; and Ira D. Landis, Treasurer.

Items of business at this meeting taken from the secretary's minutes are the following:

12. J. C. Fretz reported on the disposition of the papers of the late S. F. Coffman (1872-1954). In accordance with the provisions of Brother Coffman's will, the items relating more closely to Ontario are to be deposited with the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, the remainder to go to Goshen, Indiana, to the Archives of the Mennonite Church. Our chairman, H. S. Bender, urged that all papers which are to be left in Ontario should actually be committed to the care of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario for deposit in the archives; other members of the committee concurred.

Brother Fretz suggested that the S. F. Coffman materials which he deposited with the Acting Custodian of the Archives, together with any future materials delivered, be acknowledged to the Ontario Conference Historian, and that an additional copy be provided for the Coffman family. The committee gratefully received the report, and concurred with the suggestion of Brother Fretz on acknowledgment

ing the materials received by the Goshen Archives.

15. John A. Hostetler exhibited the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference Historian's book (handwritten and illustrated) of the late Ezra Stauffer. The committee instructed the chairman of the committee to negotiate for the deposit of this book in our church archives.

18. The chairman gave a review of the present state of the *Täuferakten* which include the following, published or projected:

1. 2. Wuertemberg, I, II
3. Baden-Palatinate
4. Hesse
5. Bavaria
6. Zurich
7. Bern
8. Bern Disputation, 1538
9. E. Switzerland
- 10, 11. Alsace, I, II
- 12, 13, 14, 15. Hutterites, I, II, III, IV
- 16, 17, 18. Austria, I, II, III
19. Rhineland
20. Hans Denk's writings
19. J. C. Wenger gave a report on the current Mennonite History Essay Contest for 1955-56.
20. For the general guidance of the judges it was agreed that both the research reflected, and the literary quality in evidence, should be considered, with a relatively higher consideration being given to research as one moves up from Class III to Class I.
21. The chairman read [a] letter of Dr. Alta Schrock, soliciting the moral support of our committee for her plan to write a fictionalized biography of Bishop Jacob S. Miller.
22. Moved and passed to appoint John A. Hostetler, chairman, Harold S. Bender, and Grant M. Stoltzfus as a committee to encourage and aid such possible projects as those of Dr. Schrock.
23. Moved and passed to authorize the treasurer to set up a "Literary Fund" to aid in such projects as those of Dr. Schrock, to receive and disburse gifts for this cause.

District Conference Historians

The editor has made an attempt to compile a list of District Conference historians. At no time has he seen a list anywhere in print. Most of the conferences have appointed a historian for some years. A few have done so recently. Any changes or corrections to the list should be reported to the editor.

The duties of the conference historian were published in the October, 1955, issue and were reprinted in leaflet form. Any who desire additional copies may send their request to the editor or to any of the members of the Historical Committee.

District Conference Historians

Conference	Historian
Alberta-Saskatchewan	to be supplied
Allegheny	John A. Hostetler, Scottdale, Pa.
Conservative Mennonite	Ivan J. Miller, Grantsville, Md.
Franconia	Ben Hess,* RFD, Souderton, Pa.
Illinois	No one appointed presently
Indiana-Michigan	John C. Wenger, 1410 S. Eighth Street, Goshen, Ind.
Iowa-Nebraska	to be supplied in 1956
Lancaster	Ira D. Landis, Route 1, Bareville, Pa.
North Central	Melvin P. Hochstetler, Wolford, N. Dak.
Ohio and Eastern	Gerald Studer, Box 326, Smithville, Ohio Chairman of Historical Committee
Ontario	J. C. Fretz, Box 401, Kitchener, Ont.
Ontario Amish Mennonite	No one appointed
Pacific Coast	U. E. Kenagy, Nebergall Sp. Road, Albany, Oregon
South Central	Kenneth King, Hesston, Kans.
South Pacific	Ervin B. Jennings, 2231 Tyler Avenue, Fresno, Calif.
Virginia	Grant Stoltzfus, Chairman; H. A. Brunk and Timothy Showalter, Historical Committee
Washington Co., Maryland, and Franklin Co., Pennsylvania	no one appointed

* Chairman of congregational historians in the conference

The Bergey Family

By D. H. BERGEY, M.D., *Philadelphia, Family Historian*

John Ulric Berge, the Immigrant

The exact date of emigration and the place whence Hans Ulrich Berge and his wife Anne Mary came have not been ascertained, but it is most probable that they came originally from Germany and emigrated to Pennsylvania to escape religious persecution and to establish a home for their descendants in the province of William Penn, where liberty of conscience was assured to them in his frame of government, and where the fertility of the soil and the low price of land assured abundant reward for the industrious farmer and a home for his descendants for generations to come.

John Ulric Berge purchased 250 acres of land in Lower Salford township, Philadelphia (now Montgomery) county, of Hugh Roberts and Rachel, his wife, on March 15, 1726. Nearly two years later he sold a hundred acres of this tract to Jacob Enger. The remainder he retained until his death, when he devised it to his second son, Michael.

Very little is known directly of the character of John Ulric Berge, but we know a number of facts concerning his life and activities which permit us to conjecture the qualities he possessed. These facts are contained in the records of the local government and elsewhere and are therefore authentic.

John Ulric Berge and his wife were Mennonites. This fact is established from the records of the Lower Salford Mennonite church, from which we learn that John Ulric Berge was one of the organizers of the congregation in 1738. A large proportion of his descendants are of the same faith today.

In 1738 Christopher Dock, the pioneer schoolmaster among the Mennonites, opened a school in the Lower Salford Mennonite church. This fact shows that the members of this congregation were imbued with the importance of education in the training of their children and in this manner secured for them advantages practically equal to those obtainable anywhere in the province at that early date.

In 1756 John Ulric Berge was one of the overseers of the poor in Lower Salford township, and in 1760 he was road supervisor. These facts show that he was a man of influence in the township and that he did not disregard his duty to the local government. It is probable that in those early days the office more frequently sought the man than is the case at the present day, and in consequence the incumbent felt it all the more his duty to give to the community that conscientious service which the office entailed.

An additional evidence of the high esteem with which John Ulric Berge was regarded by his neighbors is the frequency with which we find his name mentioned in wills and similar documents,

24. J. A. Hostetler gave a report on the papers of the late Ammon Kaufman. Mrs. Kaufman desires said papers to be deposited in the Archives of the Mennonite Church; they are currently in the possession of Sanford Shetler.
25. J. A. Hostetler reported on the prospective history of the Mennonite Publishing House.
26. H. S. Bender reported that he hopes to be released from teaching the first semester of 1956-57 to write the history of the Mennonites in America.
27. Agreed to meet at Goshen Saturday, April 6, 1957 (tentative date).
28. The chairman gave a report of the *Christian Classics* volume [Westminster Press] on the Anabaptists and other groups, and renewed his concern to see our own *Anabaptist Reader* published.
29. The committee asked John A. Hostetler to prepare a list of names for a new series of biographical sketches of Mennonite leaders in the *Gospel Her-*

ald. There was also interest expressed in a book of biographical sketches.

30. Grant M. Stoltzfus reported on the papers of L. J. Heatwole, the late Virginia bishop and church leader. The committee agreed to bring to the attention of the family the policy statement of the committee on the disposition of such papers, adopted in the 1955 meeting of our committee. The committee appointed Grant M. Stoltzfus to represent it in dealing with the heirs of L. J. Heatwole.
31. The committee agreed to recognize S. S. Wenger as its representative to the 1957 Sixth Mennonite World Conference [in Germany].
32. J. C. Wenger reported that the diaries of the late Bishop N. E. Miller have been preserved by the family.
33. S. S. Wenger announced that J. C. Wenger is delivering four addresses on our heritage at the Paradise, Pa., Mennonite Church, tonight and tomorrow.

wherein he is commissioned to oversee the settlement of estates and directed to act as guardian of orphans. It is especially interesting that he served with Bishop Henry Funk as a trustee under the will of Dielman Kolb, being therefore in very intimate and friendly relations with both Kolb and Funk, who supervised the translation of van Braght's "Book of Martyrs" from the Dutch into the German language.

John Ulric Berge died in 1762, and his wife Anne Mary some years later. Both are buried in the graveyard of the Lower Salford Mennonite church, but their graves are unmarked save by common field stones.

A Numerous and Widely Scattered Progeny

The descendants of John Ulric Berge are now very numerous, extending in most branches of the family to the eighth and ninth generations. Of his six sons, five were married, and most of the descendants of four of these have been traced. Of his five daughters, four were married, but the descendants of only one of these have been ascertained. The descendants of only five of his children have thus far been traced, yet about 5,000 direct descendants have been found.

The prevailing calling of the descendants of John Ulric Berge is, as might be expected, some division of agriculture. This appears to be the family characteristic and is maintained largely even by those branches of the family that have emigrated to the western states and to Canada.

With a progenitor of such pronounced religious belief and practice, the descendants should show evidences of the transmission of this attitude of mind, and the records collected show that at least twenty-six of the lineal descendants were and are ministers of the Gospel. This is a creditable number when we reflect that for the first four or five generations the

greater portion of the members of the family were Mennonites and that the selection of ministers in this denomination is solely by casting lots. The records also show the names of fifteen ministers of the Gospel who married into the family.

The records show the names of twelve physicians who are lineal descendants, and eight others who married into the family. In the same manner all other honorable callings have been taken up by the members of the family.

The Mennonites are opposed to war and avoid military service from principle, yet one of the sons of John Ulrich Berge served in the Revolutionary army and three of his grandsons served in the local militia during that trying period. A number of the descendants participated in the Civil War and earned honorable records.

Reunions of the Bergey Family

In 1900 the Bergey family held its first reunion and it has held a meeting each year since then. The principal objects which the promoters of the family reunion had in view were: the collection of data pertaining to the lives and activities of their ancestors, and to promulgate those sterling qualities of mind which characterized their fathers and mothers. It was believed that the family association had a legitimate place alongside the church, school, and press in the upbuilding of character and the advancement of the welfare of humanity. Each passing year strengthens the belief that the association can fulfill this function by attracting to itself the influence and co-operation of those who are capable of carrying out a work of such far-reaching nature. In the association all can meet on common ground and for the moment lay aside what might appear to others as nonessential, and thus by their united labors the elevation of mankind to a higher and broader plane will eventually be consummated.—*The Pennsylvania German*, November, 1906.

married young people, the boys and girls showed very little interest in the work of the church either by their attendance or open expression. The members of the churches saw a need—to interest the young people, and so the first Sunday school was started by David Gascho, in 1884, at Wellesley. The initial purpose of the Sunday school was to teach "German" to the young people and so increase an interest in the German preaching. The books used for the Sunday school were the German "A.B.C." books.³ Indeed, this was a beginning of a Sunday-school movement and the capturing of the interest of the young people. It is hardly to be expected that the early leaders anticipated such a rewarding and successful achievement as the Sunday school has proved to be over the period of years since its beginning.

In 1900, a Sunday school was started by two brethren by the name of Menno Kuepfer and Chris Schrag at Blake. This Sunday school met until about the year 1912. In 1914, a newly organized school was opened by John Gerber and Sol. Baechler. On Sunday afternoon, January 12, 1902, the first Sunday school of the Poole church was held. John Ropp led in devotion, reading from Phil. 2, and led in prayer. The lesson for January 12 was, "Pouring Out of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:1-11.⁴

The first Sunday school was held in the 16th line East Zorra church on May 17, 1903. Solomon M. Bender, Chris Ruby, Sr., and David Bender served as the first superintendents of this school. The Sunday school at Wilmot's two churches, Steinman's and St. Agatha, opened in 1906. The first superintendents of this Sunday school were Chris Gascho and Chris Litwiller. The ministers of this congregation led the devotions for the Sunday-school period occasionally for about a year.

The Sunday schools recorded so far used as their textbook the German A.B.C. and the New Testament. The German A.B.C. book served the purpose of teaching German to the young people and the boys and girls and later the New Testament was used as a Scriptural text. These schools later adopted the International Sunday School Lessons as published by the Mennonite Publishing House. But it is not definite when the change came about; in fact, it wasn't a sudden change-over.

On November 3, 1921, a number of Sunday-school superintendents met to discuss and plan for a Sunday-school conference. The object of a Sunday-school conference was to discuss openly ways and methods to overcome difficulties in Sunday-school work and to further the cause among the young people. This discussion of interested Sunday-school workers became a reality and a conference was held on May 24, 25, 1922. The program included some very interesting talks and a copy of the program is preserved by my father, N. S. Bender. The guest speaker was Eli Frey from Ohio. The

A History of the Sunday Schools of the Ontario Amish Mennonite Conference

EZRA J. BENDER

It is probably a true saying that the Sunday school has contributed more to the spiritual well-being of the church than any other organization within the church. In some congregations of the conference there had been an organized church service for as long as 66-80 years before a Sunday school was started, while in other congregations there had been church services for 16-52 years before a Sunday school was organized.¹

The Wilmot congregation, which consists of two churches, the church at St. Agatha and the church located two miles east of New Hamburg called the Steinman church, was started in 1826, by a group of Amish Mennonites from Germany and Alsace who left Europe to

escape military training. In the years that followed some more families moved in from Pennsylvania and Europe and the other congregations of the conference were organized. Among this group was Christian Ropp, who heard of the promise given to Christian Nafziger, by the Government of Canada, a promise of military exemption.²

The language of the members of the churches was German and so the preaching on a Sunday morning was German. As I mentioned in a previous statement, for a number of years the church service was a preaching service and so employed little or no talent of the young people. This was detrimental to the interest of the young people and as a result the un-

conference of the Sunday schools is an annual event.

The Sunday school that was organized at East Zorra church spread in the year 1935. On May 5, a Sunday school was opened in a vacant Methodist church which was about five miles southeast of the 16th line East Zorra church. Henry Brenneman and C. K. Bender served as the first superintendents of this Sunday school. This is rather interesting that from here on it is the Sunday school that advances and pushes into new areas whereas in the other schools the church service was organized for some time before a Sunday school. This Sunday school meets every week and a regular church service is organized here. In 1942, a Sunday school was started in a rented Presbyterian church in Tavistock. This church has since been sold and the East Zorra congregation built a new building in Tavistock and therefore at present there are three Sunday schools separately organized.

On July 14, 1946, Menno Zehr of the Poole congregation and Valentine Nafziger from the Wellesley congregation

started a Sunday school at Millbank. This Sunday school has since been meeting every week and a church is now organized at this place. In 1948, several families moved into a new district, a district which probably knew very little about Mennonites. On April 18, Wilfred Schlegel started a Sunday school at Nairn, which is in Middlesex County, near the city of London. This Sunday-school movement has since grown and was organized on March 6, 1949, as the Nairn church. In 1948, a Sunday school was started or maybe resulted from a community summer Bible school held in the city of Stratford. On October 2, 1949, a Sunday school was started by Arlan Erb and Solomon Bast at Crosshill. In 1952, a Sunday school was started in the village of Wellesley. This is an effort of several interested young people from the Wellesley congregation. In 1953, a Sunday school was started in the city of London. This work is in charge of John Wagler.

At the present time there are fourteen Sunday schools which have been started by churches in the conference.

during the week and my church and Sunday school services on Sunday. At that time I was a S.S. scholar in one Sunday school, a teacher in another, and superintendent in a third Sunday school. Besides attending to these three Sunday schools, I also attended each Sunday two church services, one in the forenoon and the other in the evening. Sunday in this way was for me a busy day, but was what I enjoyed.

One beautiful sunshiny Sunday morning, the last Sunday in May 1853, I was told that there was someone at the door of my boarding house who asked to see me, and going to the door saw standing before me the old Mennonite Bishop John M. Brenneman. When I asked him to come in the house and make himself at home with us, he told me that he was in company with the aged minister, Peter Nissley, of Lancaster Co., Pa. They had been visiting some of the small Mennonite congregations in the west and among the congregations the one at Sterling, Ill., and after holding communion with them, they had started away on Saturday morning with the intention of getting to Elida, Ohio, to the home of Bro. Brenneman and Bro. Nissley was to be his guest over Sunday and would preach there. But when they came to Chicago the Saturday trains had all left and there was no train to take them to Elida until late on Sunday afternoon. All they could do was to remain in Chicago over Sunday.

It was for them indeed a sad disappointment, but it has been a comfort to me and one of the happy events of my life that God had so ordered it as you will see in the events following.

I took pleasure in entertaining the brother, took him along to church service and brought him back with me for dinner. Brother Nissley had relatives or friends residing on Michigan Avenue with whom he had spent the night and after dinner he also came to see me. The two brethren were not pronounced friends of Sunday schools of which fact I was well aware and so I had to use prudence in taking them to a place which their church rules did not sanction. I told them this was a special day, the anniversary of the establishing of the school. I was the superintendent and we had made special preparations for the service, and as the superintendent I had to be there and asked them kindly to go with me. Without any objection they at once consented to accompany me and I felt glad to have them. They never said a word to me against Sunday schools. They seemed rather pleased with the talk, the singing and the teaching, and a little later I had a letter from Bro. Nissley, which praised my work and bid me God's blessing on the work I was doing, which was a matter of great enjoyment to me.

(This address was copied from a notebook in the John F. Funk collection in the Mennonite Church Archives. The date and place of the address are not given. The material above was slightly edited by Melvin Gingerich.)

An Address by John F. Funk

Second Talk

Beloved friends:

Two weeks ago the 28th day of May was to me a special day, and on that account I was really sorry that we could not meet as first arranged. From another standpoint I was glad that the Lord in His wise providence had arranged the matter. I am feeling that the Lord's way is always the best, and we have the blessed assurance that what God doeth is always well done.

I was going in that day to tell you whatever the 28th day of May is to you, it is a very special day to me.

In 1862, in the month of October, at the time of the Indiana State Conference, I made my first visit to Elkhart and Elkhart County—my first visit to the Mennonite people of this locality and attended for the first time in my life the Mennonite meeting at Yellow Creek. Remember this was in the fall of 1862.

It was a very remarkable meeting to me as well as to many others. I was then "that young fellow from Chicago." They didn't know my name so they distinguished me from all the other visitors here at that time but I did not know it until many years after.

I had intended to be present at that conference, but did not get here to Yellow Creek until the conference was over.

The conference was then held, if I remember right, on the second Friday in October. Saturday, the day following the conference, was the day for baptismal

services and on this occasion 48 persons, mostly young men, as it was then yet in the early part of the Civil War and the young men were all subject to be drafted into the service, and the government had passed a law that all "Conscientious Objectors" (as they were called in the late war) belonging to a church whose principles were opposed to warfare could pay a fine of \$300 in lieu of service and remain at home, and this was to some extent a reason that so many were baptized at that time and received into church membership. It was indeed a grand sight to see so many unite with the people of God and gave me a very favorable and encouraging idea of the Mennonite Church in Indiana.

The day following was Sunday, and for the Yellow Creek church communion day and drew together an immense crowd of people and over 600 brethren and sisters participated in the communion and feet-washing. I shall never forget that meeting and the few days we spent together here at this place and I rejoiced in my heart for these happy experiences of a living faith and religion.

Here I became acquainted with Bishop John M. Brenneman of Elida, Allen Co., Ohio. He was the bishop that did most of the preaching and officiated in the baptismal services and the communion services.

I went back to my home in Chicago and attended to my work in the lumber office

Clergy and Laity

A SUGGESTION

BY J. HORSCH

Noticing that in a recent number of the *Herald of Truth*, I am made to use the word *laymember*, I take this occasion to say without wishing to be fault-finding in any way that the use of this word in speaking of one of the brotherhood does not appear to me to be appropriate.

Webster gives the following definitions: "*lay*, of or pertaining to the laity, as distinct from the clergy"; "*laity*, the people as distinguished from the clergy." The word *clergy* is derived from the Latin word for priest, *clericus*, and means priesthood. It is in use only in the Roman Catholic Church, and the church most closely related to it, viz., the Episcopalian. *Laity* for brotherhood presupposes the use of *clergy*, or priesthood for the ministry. Both words belong together and if there is no clergy, we cannot consistently speak of a laity. If it is right to use the one term, the other can be used with equal right.

Laity is derived from a Greek word which often has the meaning of unlearned or ignorant, and even in English the word is used in that sense. The reason why this word has in the Roman Church been substituted for the New Testament term brotherhood, or congregation, is obvious. Ignorance in things divine was one of the requirements of church-membership, knowledge of the Bible by the congregation was the thing dreaded most by the priests. They alone claimed the right

to be learned in spiritual things, alone claimed to have the wisdom to understand the Holy Scriptures and the authority to be administrators of divine grace. They desired to fix a great gulf between themselves and the congregations.

It is, as a matter of fact, evident that when this term has been used among us as Mennonites, it was not by any means with the intention to convey such ideas. The thought, however, suggests itself that it would be well to avoid words, which in their true sense convey wrong meanings.

Speaking of this it may not be out of place to call attention to another matter which has previously been brought up in the *Herald*. The prefixing of the term

Saint to the names of the apostles and evangelists is a remnant of Roman Catholic saint cult. It would be more consistent to prefix this word to the names of all saints, but it would not be according to Scriptural precept. The Apostle Peter in speaking of Paul speaks of him as "our dear brother Paul." Although every true Christian is, in New Testament language, a saint, yet to use this term as a title is not Scriptural. The reason why we never hear anybody speak of Saint Cornelius or Saint Lydia, or Saint Menno Simons, is not that these persons were not saints, but that they were never declared to be such by the Romish pope. Although even in the English Bible the term *saint* is used in the headings when the names of the apostolic writers are mentioned, this is by no means the case in the original Greek. Our forefathers were very careful not to make themselves guilty of this sort of inconsistencies.

—Madison, Wis. *Herald of Truth*
(Dec. 15, 1898).

Mennonite Camp Meeting

An Editorial in the Herald of Truth
(Sept. 1, 1889)

In an exchange we read the notice of a camp meeting under the above caption, and herewith enter our protest against the use of the word in this connection. The camp meeting is a thing unknown among orthodox Mennonites. The discipline of the Mennonite church does not recognize anything of this kind; in fact absolutely prohibits it. And it sounds very strange indeed, to hear any one speak or to read of a Mennonite camp meeting. The Mennonites have houses wherein they worship, and so have most other churches, and it would be well if all the houses of worship of the Mennonites as well as of other de-

nominations, could be well filled at each time of service. There was a time when it was necessary for people to hold their worship in the woods, in caves, or some hidden, out-of-the-way place, in order to avoid being discovered by the persecutors. That necessity does not now exist, and he who desires in quietude and in the fear of the Lord to edify his soul and enjoy communion with God and with his fellow saints, will rather seek the quiet services of God's house than the boisterous and exciting scenes that usually accompany the services of the camp meeting.

(For additional items on the same subject, see *Herald of Truth*, 1879, p. 215; and 1881, p. 155.—Ed.)

Letter to J. E. Hartzler

PerKasie, Pa.
Sept. 24, 1917

Rev. J. E. Hartzler
Goshen, Indiana
Dear Brother,

I am glad that one young man of my Sunday school class is taking course in your college. Bro. Kratz is a nice quiet humble, good behavior young Christian man.

As you know that lots of our people in Bucks and Montg. Co. are not interested in the college as they ought to be. It will depend a great deal how Bro. Clayton Kratz will return at the end of his term.

I hope that Bro. Kratz will make a success and will stay Christ like. And that more of my class will take a course in the college. We would be glad to have you to pay us a visit and preach for us at Blooming Glen and PerKasie.

Yours truly,
William M. Moyer

(Original letter in the Archives of the Mennonite Church)

Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society

John A. Hostetler was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society for a five-year term. He succeeds Grant Stoltzfus who served in that office from 1951 until 1956. The two-county Pennsylvania historical group maintains the Museum and Historical House at West Overton (between Scottdale and Mount Pleasant) which was settled in 1800 by Henry Oberholtzer of Eastern Pennsylvania and his company of about thirty souls.

One of the sons of Henry Oberholtzer was Abraham (Overholt) who is credited with being the first discoverer and user of coal in this section of the county. A number of Abraham Overholt's descendants became outstanding leaders in the industrial life in western Pennsylvania. According to Edward Yoder (*M.Q.R.* July, 1941) the coal mining industry, manufac-

turing of coke and smelting of iron ore, began to be developed in Westmoreland and Fayette counties extensively by 1870. Two prominent men whose names are associated with the development of these industries were Abraham O. Tintzman and Henry Clay Frick, both of whom were grandsons of Abraham and Maria (Stauffer) Overholt. Frick's fortune at his death was estimated at one hundred million.

Henry Clay Frick (1848-1919) was the son of Elizabeth Overholt and John W. Frick and was born at West Overton, the present site of the Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society Museum. Also located in a large dwelling on the grounds is a Mennonite room with artifacts of long ago. The Museum contains a large number of local documents, tools, crafts, and implements of the region.

A Genealogical Trip to Switzerland

By OSCAR KUHN, Author of "German and Swiss Settlements of Pennsylvania," etc.

In the summer of 1900 I went abroad with the intention of spending a year there. One of the things I wanted to do was to visit those parts of Switzerland from which came the early settlers of Lancaster County, among whom was my ancestor, Bishop John Herr. The original home of these settlers, though many had lingered a number of years in the Palatinate, was in the cantons of Berne and Zürich. In the fall of 1900 I spent the month of October in the delightful old city of Berne, working in the city library and making trips to the outlying country.

It was a matter of interest to me to see how many Lancaster County names are to be found in the graveyards of canton Berne. Thus in the little town of Muri I found the following names on the tombstones: Bürki, Rohrer, Strahm, Maurer, Brechbühl and Gerber. In the directory of the village of Lauperswyl, the names Berger, Bieri, and Stauffer occur; in Eggiswyl Neukomm, Gaumann, Hochstetter, Holdiman, Galli; in Lützelflüh Flückiger and Schürch; in Langnau, Aeschlimann and Wisler; in Diessbach, Rüeggsegger and Krähenbühl.

The chief object, however, of my visit to Switzerland was the village of Langnau, in the Emmenthal, a few miles from the city of Berne. I had read with great interest the book on *Die Bernischen Täufer* by Pastor Müller of that place, and had determined to visit him.

In his book he gives an account of the circumstances which led to the large emigration of the Mennonites of the Emmenthal in 1709-10, many of whom later migrated to America and formed the first white settlement in Lancaster County, under Bishop John Herr and Martin Kindig.

Among these emigrants were Ulrich Fahrni, of Schwarzenegg; Bendicht Maurer, of Diessbach; Heinrich Wenger, of Moglenburg; Martin Strahm, of Hochstetten; Peter Gerber and his wife, Verena Aeschlimann, of Langnau; Nikolas Baumgartner, of Trub; Hans Wisler, of Langnau; Daniel Neukomm, of Eggiswyl; Katherine Haldimann, of Hochstetten; Barbara Rohrer, of Bolligen; Hans Schallenberger and Elizabeth Neuenschwander, of Trub; Hans Hauri, of Lenzburg; Maria Vögli, of Herzogenbuchsee; Peter Krähenbühl and Barbara Rüeggsegger, of Diessbach; Hans Zürcher, of Frutigen, and others.

It was the fifteenth of October when I took the train from Berne for Langnau. The day was beautiful, the country superb. Everywhere stretched the luxuriant grass like a green velvet carpet. Hill and valley, river and stream, picturesque villages and lonely houses made a varied landscape of ever-changing interest, while on the distant horizon one could see the high mountains of the Bernese *Oberland*, covered with snow. Surely no fairer country could be found in the world.

I was kindly received by Pastor Müller, took dinner with him in his spacious *chalet*, and after visiting the church, went to the town hall, where the church books of the district are preserved from 1555 down to the present.

I had a really delightful time in the sunny, clean and cheerful room, turning over these old volumes containing the names of the ancestors of so many Lancaster County families. Here I found that in 1556 were baptized Peter, son of Bendicht Aeschlimann, and Verena, daughter of Oswald Zürcher; in 1557, Hans, son of Christian Brechbühl; in 1558, Uoli Zoug (Zug); in 1562, Peter Kräyenbühl, and so on.

Among the other names were Oberli, Kündig, Frantz, Haldiman, Bichsel, Boss, Stram, Schenk, Gutt, Leeman, Longenegger, Gerber, Lautz.

After spending the afternoon with Pastor Müller in visiting the town and surrounding country of Langnau and the Emmenthal I took the train back to Bern, having spent a most delightful day in the original home of many of our Lancaster County families.

In the library at Bern I found a number of old books and manuscripts dealing with the Swiss Mennonites, both in the cantons of Bern and Zürich. As is well known, many of the Pennsylvania Mennonites came also from Zürich. It was not till the following spring that I found the opportunity of visiting that city. I came up from Italy in the month of May and spent two weeks working in the *Stadtbibliothek* and taking trips to the villages whence the Mennonites originally came.

Here in the old Latin chronicles I could read how "*Johannes Landis Tigurinus* (of Zurich) anno 1614 *decollatus erat et sua bona confiscata fuerant*";* how Hans and Stephan Zehnder and Heinrich Frick were haled before the magistrates. Similar mention was made of Mennonites named Baumgartner, Ringier, Bachmann, Brupacher, Egli, Müller, etc.

Among the interesting books in manuscript in the Zürich library is a large folio *Zürcher Geschlechter-Buch*, with hand-painted coats of arms. Here are to be found the families Aebli, Armbrüster, Ap-

penzeller, Böckli, Boxx, Brennemann, Bruner, Gerwer, Kündig, Landis, Meili and others.

Another book is entitled *Eine ausführliche Relation oder Beschreibung aus Carolina*, printed in Bern, 1742.

About this time so many Swiss were emigrating to Pennsylvania that the government thought it necessary to take measures to put a stop to it. One way of doing this was to frighten would-be colonists by painting the danger of such voyages. Hence the following pamphlet (in the Zürich library): "*Eine Leyder Wahrehaftte traurige Geschichte und Beschreibung wie im nächst abgewichenem Monat Julii, dieses noch lauffenden 1754sten Jahres, Ein grosses Schiff nach West Indien mit 468 personen, welche von Rotterdam in die neue Welt abgefahren, zwischen Pennsylvanien und Philadelphia aber Zimmerlich untergangen und zerscheitert, mithin schier alle darauf befundene Seelen ein lamentables Ende genommen. Welche wahre Geschichte nach gethaner Relation auch von einer poetischen Feder ist beschrieben worden in diesem Jahr 1754.*"

In 1735 a description of a journey from Zürich to America by Ludwig Weber was published. Among those who are mentioned here as going to Pennsylvania are Heinrich, Jacob and Kilian Dufendörffer aus Bassenstorf. These are probably the ancestors of many of the Dieffenderfer family.

In the manuscript book of decrees passed by the authorities of Zürich are to be found "mandates" under the years 1734, 1735, 1736, etc., forbidding anyone to leave the land without special permission, also threatening with punishment the "öftern im Land herum ziehende Aufwiegler und Verführer zu solch gefährlichen und verderblichen Reisen."

The above is a very brief sketch of some of the interesting facts that I learned in my trip to Switzerland. It is beyond doubt that there in the villages around Berne and Zürich the ancestors of many Pennsylvania-German families lived for centuries before going to America. The reader, however, must be warned that it is well-nigh impossible to connect the original colonist in Pennsylvania with the family in Switzerland.

—*The Pennsylvania German*
(Nov. 1906)

*"Was beheaded and his goods were confiscated."

History of the Berlin Congregation, Ontario

The old frame meetinghouse at Berlin, Ont., erected in 1834, on the site of the old log meetinghouse erected in 1813, is, according to an item in a Berlin, Ont., paper, soon to be only a memory. At a business meeting of the members of the congregation on the 26th of December it was decided to tear down the old building in the spring to make room for a commodious brick building.

In this connection it may be of some interest to give a short sketch of this

(Eby's) meetinghouse and the congregation that was organized early in the last century. For several years from 1801 there was no minister there to attend to the spiritual needs of the new colony, nevertheless the brethren met in their humble abodes in the forest and some brother, usually Samuel Betzner or Joseph Scherch (Serk) would read a chapter from the Martyr's Mirror or more often from Bish. Heinrich Funck's well-known "Erklaerung" and Menno Simons' "Fun-

damentbuch," which works were then prized very highly by our people. In this way they sought to edify one another.

In course of time Bro. Joseph Bechtel was ordained to the ministry and, according to Dr. Aaron Eby, was the first Mennonite minister in Waterloo Co. On the 27th of November, 1809, Benjamin Eby, sixth son of Christian and Catharine (Bricker) Eby of Warwick Twp., Lancaster Co., Pa., where he was born May 2, 1785, was chosen and ordained to the ministry, he having been baptized and received into fellowship on May 4, 1804, at Conestoga meetinghouse, Lancaster Co., Pa., by Bish. Chr. Burkholder. The ordination probably took place at some private house, in the "Eby settlement" as the vicinity of the present city of Berlin was then known. On the 11th of October 1812, he was ordained to the office of bishop. Through his indefatigable efforts the new colony finally agreed, in 1813, to erect a meetinghouse, the congregation having become too large to be accommodated in even the largest private house. It was built of logs and was called "Eby's Versammlungshaus." In this building Bish. Eby for a number of years taught school during the winter months. Very few indeed are the pupils still living who attended school there.

As the congregation continued to grow the log meetinghouse in time became too small, and was replaced in 1834 by a frame building, at that time one of the largest houses of worship in that part of the country. After Bish. Eby's death, June 28, 1853, his fifth son Christian, born in 1821, was ordained in 1854, and was a well-known and beloved pastor until his death in 1859. Other ministers and bishops in charge of or assistants in the ministerial work in this congregation: Bish. Joseph Hagey, born, June 11, 1810; ordained minister May 31, 1851; bishop, October 11, 1852; died, Dec. 31, 1876. Pre. Moses Erb, born Aug. 6, 1821; ordained, April 14, 1851; died July 31, 1901. Pre. Jacob M. Oberholtzer, born March 30, 1800, ordained in his youth and died Jan. 14, 1879. Pre. John Steckley, born Nov. 25, 1802, ordained as a young man, and died April 22, 1879. Pre. Elias Snyder, born Sept. 3, 1815, ordained in 1874, and died Apr. 24, 1890. Bish. Daniel Wismer, born July 29, 1820, ordained minister over 35 years ago, and bishop some years later in Kansas, but now resides in Berlin, Ont. Pre. Abraham C. Weber, born March 14, 1817; ordained Dec. 22, 1864; died July 6, 1874. Bish. Elias Weber, born Feb. 22, 1834, ordained, first deacon, then to the ministry and, after the death of Bish. Jos. Hagey in 1876, to the office of bishop. Bish. Amos Cressman, born Sept. 4, 1834, ordained deacon June 19, 1854; minister, June 30, 1867; bishop, Jan. 24, 1875. Pre. Samuel Bowman, born July 15, 1834, ordained, Feb. 2, 1878. Bish. Jonas Snider, born Oct. 2, 1858, ordained minister June 24, 1892; and bishop a few years later.

Pre. E. S. Hallman is the latest addition to the ministerial force of the congregation, he having been ordained less than

ten years ago. The congregation suffered a rupture, in common with other congregations in the United States and Canada, when, about thirty years ago under the leadership of several prominent men, among them Solomon Eby, a dissatisfied and expelled minister in the Mennonite congregation, a new body was formed which, after various amalgamations with other small bodies, finally assumed the name of Mennonite Brethren in Christ. The Eby congregation has formed

the nucleus from which a number of congregations in Waterloo Twp. were organized, and although in this manner the number was from time to time decreased, it has prospered and the membership today numbers probably in the neighborhood of 200 souls. May God prosper the work as carried on in the church, Sunday school and young people's meeting and give the church a large growth in number and spiritual power.

—*Herald of Truth* (Jan. 15, 1902, p. 18)

Singers' Table

By EARL B. GROFF

Remember when the "Singers' Table" was in use in Mellinger Church?

This part of our worship service was discontinued years ago and was never used in our present building. In the old church building the pulpit was located in the end of the building toward the highway. The "Singers' Table" was placed endwise against the front of the pulpit, thus the pulpit became the cross or the head of a T-shaped arrangement. Around this table the best singers of the congregation sat, usually six or seven, leading out and carrying the tune for all the singing. These singers remained seated and all singing was congregational. Then, as now, some selections were made by the ministry and others by the singers themselves. The singing was in both English and German. Small songbooks that contained only the words of the song were used. It contained no notes or music.

We have been unable to learn just when the use of this "Singers' Table" was discontinued. As near as we can tell, it must have been shortly after the turn of the century, as our minister, David L. Landis, reports that it was no longer used at the time of his ordination in 1911.

Jonas Buckwalter—whose life span was 1820-1912. He was the father of Henry and Milton Buckwalter and the grandfather of Katie M. Buckwalter, a member of our congregation.

David N. Lefever (1824-1904). He lived on a property on the Old Factory Road which today is known as the Paul Miller greenhouse property. He was a great-uncle of Mrs. Elias (Lizzie) Lefever.

Tobias R. Kreider (1827-1903). He lived along the Old Factory Road (Millport Road today) where Harry Nissley now lives. He was the father of "Early John" Kreider, a former church trustee. Tobias R. was the grandfather of Mrs. J. W. (Emma) Denlinger.

Abraham B. Groff (1841-1921). He lived on what is now the Henry Gemperling farm and later with his daughter, Mrs. Aaron (Mary) Denlinger at their home on the Strasburg Pike near Bonholtzer's Mill. He was the father of Mrs. Martin (Ida) Good and the grandfather of Cletus Doutrich, Paul G. Landis, and of

two of our Sunday school superintendents—the two Earls.

David B. Groff (1849-1934). He was the father of Lissie K. and Naomi K. Groff of East King Street and of Elmer K. Groff of the Old Philadelphia Pike. He was also the brother of the above mentioned Abraham B. Groff.

Benjamin D. Heller (1849-1912). He lived on one of the farms then occupied by Hellers near Eden, the one where the Christ Fagers now reside. He was the father of Mrs. Christ (Laura) Fager, of Harvey and John Heller. He was the grandfather of Clyde, Elizabeth, and Mary Heller.

J. Frank Landis (1849-1906). He was the father of Mrs. (Landis) Stella Heller and David L. Landis, our minister. J. Frank was the leader of the singers and, we are told, sat at the end of the long table with his back to the congregation.

George D. Lefever (1842-1917), known as "Hollow George" Lefever. He farmed on the Old Factory Road where Clarence Neff now lives. Later he moved off the farm to where Clair Ressler now lives. He was a great-uncle to our minister Harry S. Lefever.

Aaron D. Landis (1856-1941) He was a son of Preacher John L. Landis of Mellingers. Aaron was the father of Sanford, and Aaron—one of our present church trustees. Aaron D. was also one of our very early Sunday-school superintendents. These are only the names of those "sitters" for whom we have reasonable proof. Undoubtedly there were more. We did not attempt to name all the children or grandchildren of the above, only a few to point us to representatives of their families as of today. The writer enjoyed the help and personal contacts with some of our older people to assemble this, and would welcome corrections or additional information on this subject.

This old table, which saw so many years of the Lord's service, is being used by one of our Sunday-school classes in our basement today. The singers' table was the general thing in our Lancaster Conference practice in the yesteryears of long ago.—*Mellingers Notes*, June 17, 1956.

MENNONITE HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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Mennonitische Rundschau (1878-1956)

By FRANK H. EPP

The *Mennonitische Rundschau* is a 16-page German-language weekly published every Wednesday at Winnipeg, Manitoba, by The Christian Press, Ltd. As a Christian family paper, the *MR* (*Mennonitische Rundschau*) circulates in German Mennonite communities primarily in Canada and South America, but also in Europe and the United States.

Since its founding as the *Nebraska Ansiedler* in 1878, the *MR* has had eight editors coming from several branches of the Mennonite Church, namely: the Mennonite Church, the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church, and the Mennonite Brethren Church. The present editor is H. F. Klassen.

As the largest and oldest German Mennonite paper in America, the *MR* has historically sought to serve the German-speaking Mennonite brotherhood in all parts of the world. In recent years, however, particularly in the last decade, it has tended to serve more the interests of one Mennonite group, although it has not lost its former inter-Mennonite character altogether.

This study will divide the history of this paper into four periods. Its historical development will be traced in each of the periods with an attempt to discover the factors that contributed to the making and also the unmaking of the *Rundschau* as an inter-Mennonite periodical.

At Lincoln, Nebraska, 1878-80

The forerunner of the *MR* was the *Nebraska Ansiedler* published at Lincoln, Nebraska, as a supplement to the *Herald of Truth* of Elkhart, Indiana, from 1878 to 1888.¹

When Mennonite settlers from South Russia emigrated to the United States in the 1870's, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad was anxious to have them settle on her land in the West. To promote this purpose the railroad company needed a periodical, a German periodical or newspaper, through which to present settlement possibilities to the German Mennonite immigrants.

Railroad company officials contacted the Mennonite Publishing Company in Elkhart, Indiana. Negotiations resulted in the publication of the *Nebraska Ansiedler* as a supplement to the *Herold der Wahrheit*, beginning in June of 1878, with the railroad footing the bill. John F. Funk was the editor.²

The *Nebraska Ansiedler* was published

primarily in the interests of the German Mennonite settlers in Nebraska, but also for Mennonite immigrants from Russia which settled in other states. "With the stated purpose of giving a Christian interpretation to news, it contained articles on crops, animal husbandry, school affairs, domestic and foreign news, market prices, and other features."³

When the railroad company withdrew support after the immigration and settlement movement had subsided, the *Nebraska Ansiedler* had won wide support and circulation, and the Mennonite Publishing Company, Elkhart, Indiana, assumed publishing responsibility.⁴

At Elkhart, Indiana, 1880-1908

Established as a private company by John F. Funk in 1864 and joined by his brother in 1869, Funk's firm was incorporated as the Mennonite Publishing Company on May 1, 1875, with widely held stock ownership.⁵

In 1880 the name of the *Nebraska Ansiedler* was changed to *Mennonitische Rundschau*, and John F. Harms, a member of the Mennonite Brethren Church and immigrant from Russia in 1878, became the editor.⁶

The first two volumes of *MR* unfortunately were not available when this study was made. In the issues of 1882 and 1883 there is, however, ample evidence that the editors and publishers aimed to serve all Mennonite groups.

The first issue available in the Bethel College Historical Library carries a statement under the title on the front page indicating that the *MR* is "Gewidmet der Mittheilung von Nachrichten aus mennonitischen Kreisen von nah und fern."⁷

The *Rundschau* claimed to be the "einzige mennonitisches Blatt . . . welches aus allen mennonitischen Siedlungen Nachrichten bringt."⁸ A statement from the publishers outlined the purpose and outreach of the *Rundschau*.

The *MR* appeared to be quite successful in its attempt to reach into all Mennonite communities. It circulated in the United States, Canada, and Russia. In the latter country there were over 500 subscribers as early as May 15, 1883. No other Mennonite periodical, published in or outside of Russia, had such a large circulation among Mennonites in that country.⁹

A report on circulation in 1890 indicated that the *Rundschau* was successfully win-

ning subscribers in most of the Mennonite communities, particularly in America. In most of the states and provinces listed below there were more than a hundred subscribers and in several there were nearly a thousand.¹⁰

America: Alberta, Assiniboia (Saskatchewan), California, Colorado, North and South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Idaho, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Manitoba, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington; *Europe:* Baden, Frankreich, Galizien, Holland, Pfalz, Sachsen, Suedruszland, Schweiz, Westfalen, Westpreussen; *Asia:* Turkestan, China.

The main contents of the *MR* before the turn of the century were news articles from the various communities. Beginning on the front page, they often took up almost all of the paper. Of greatest significance in these news items were the family and community affairs which the settlers in the new country recorded for their relatives in other parts of the country as well as in the old country, Russia. In addition the *Rundschau* contained political and cultural news as well as practical helps for the settlers. Advertising was directed mainly at the needs of new settlers.

Harms remained editor until 1886, when he was succeeded by a non-Mennonite, Maximilian Matuskewitz, who, however, remained unknown to the readers.¹¹ In August, 1895, D. F. Jantzen became the editor. For four years he continued in the policy of his predecessors, making a special attempt to gain correspondents in communities wherever there were Mennonites.

When G. G. Wiens became editor in January of 1899, a rather aggressive policy of promoting the *MR* as an inter-Mennonite paper was begun. It must be remembered that the various branches of the Mennonite Church were struggling to establish their own denominational papers during this time. This, no doubt, was a factor in creating a need for the constant re-evaluation of the place and function of a paper like the *MR*.

In September, 1903, Wiens, who had so vigorously spoken for inter-Mennonite cooperation, gave up his work as editor of the *MR*. Although he wrote a lengthy farewell, the actual reason for his leaving was not clearly stated.

For a while the *MR* was without an official editor, until M. B. Fast was appointed to serve in that capacity. He, too, manifested a passion for keeping the paper inter-Mennonite, but apparently in a more subdued way.

Under the direction of editor Fast, the *MR* also served as a receiving and dispatching agency for funds contributed by the American Mennonites for relief in Russia.

Early in 1904 the Mennonite Publishing Company was seriously threatened when a local bank closed up. The company then offered bonds for sale to the public. In 1906 a serious fire caused the company to go bankrupt. A government-recognized agency assumed control of the finances of the company. This agency made a vigorous attempt to collect subscription fees and other moneys owing the company.

On September 1, 1908, John F. Funk, president of the company, announced that the business had been sold to the Mennonite Publication Board and that henceforth the *MR* would be published at Scottdale, Pennsylvania.

An analysis of the content of the *MR* prior to its transfer to Scottdale reveals that it consisted predominantly of news items from Mennonite communities. As many as eleven out of the sixteen pages were devoted to community news.

A survey of the first issue of every month for the first six months of 1908 reveals that there were active correspondents in at least thirteen states, three provinces, and in South Russia. Most of the news articles came from South Russia, with 37 news articles recorded in the seven issues studied, Manitoba with 29, Kansas with 27, and Saskatchewan with 21.

The main content of the correspondence and news articles was family news and communications between families in North America and Russia. Although an accurate analysis of the content of these articles is virtually impossible, most of them containing a little bit of everything, including settlement news, crop conditions, weather, a record of the predominant theme in the articles reveals that, in the six issues studied, only 19 can be considered religious in nature, and only two of these made reference to a particular Mennonite Church. This was from a total of about 180 news articles recorded.

At Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1908-23

The new publishers were the Mennonite Publication Board and Publishing House owned and operated by the several district conferences of the (Old) Mennonite Church.¹² This denominational control, however, apparently did not affect the purpose of the paper. The major portion of the (Old) Mennonite constituency was no longer needing a German publication, the *Herold der Wahrheit*, German organ of fourteen (Old) Mennonite and Amish Mennonite conferences, having been discontinued as a separate publication in November of 1901.

The first issue of the *MR* appeared at

Scottdale, September 9, 1908, in a three-column format and 20 pages. The general content remained the same with a good deal of space again given to news and correspondence from the various communities. World news, practical helps for the farmer, and advertising also took up considerable space. Devotional and editorial articles took up pages 3 and 10, respectively. The *MR* now had over 5,000 readers.¹³

The popularity of this paper continued. When M. B. Fast wrote his farewell editorial in 1910, he could say that the *MR* was being read by families in all the Mennonite church groups in America.

C. B. Wiens succeeded Fast as editor in October of 1910, for ten full years, until June of 1920. During these ten years of steady and faithful editing he continued very much in the policies set by M. B. Fast, with perhaps a slight increase in devotional and doctrinal articles.

The new editor, William Winsinger, shifted the policy somewhat. Whereas his predecessors had placed a premium on news and correspondence coming from the Mennonite communities, Winsinger relegated these to second or even third place.

In the beginning of 1922 Herman H. Neufeld, of Herbert, Saskatchewan, became associate editor. For a while he continued his work from Herbert, but later moved to Scottdale. During this time the needs of the Mennonites in Russia received considerable attention in the *MR*. Again this paper served as major medium between the American and Russian Mennonite communities.

A special column of relief notes was introduced. Both Winsinger and Neufeld took great interest in the relief movement as it related to the emerging Mennonite Central Committee. Neufeld forwarded "Food Drafts for Russia" for American donors.

During the months of 1922 the columns of the *MR* gave priority to the needs in Russia. In addition to the "Hilfswerk-Notizen," columns like the following were introduced: "Nachrichten aus Russland," "Verwandte gesucht," lists of American donors, and later on the lists of Mennonite immigrants coming to Canada from Russia. The March 1 issue was a special 32-page edition containing only news items and articles on the Russian situation. Likewise, the March 8 issue contained only items on Russia; even the editorials had been left out to conserve precious space for the presentation of the dire needs of the Russian brethren. In turn the Russian brethren used the *MR* as a medium of communication with the American people. Likewise, the early issues of 1923 contained mostly family news from Russia; there was little local correspondence from American and Canadian communities.

In September of 1923 the Mennonite Publishing House made an announcement stating that the *MR* had been sold to Rundschau Publishing House, of Winni-

peg, Manitoba, with Herman H. Neufeld as editor and business manager of the new publication center. One of the reasons for the shift to Winnipeg was because most of the readers were now in Canada and the Midwestern states.

At Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1923-56

The Rundschau Publishing House was established with a missionary motive, as over and against a profit motive. A publication board of representatives of Mennonite churches in Manitoba and of the new immigrants was formed. Members of this board were listed as being Herman H. Neufeld, Winnipeg; Heinrich Doerksen, Niverville; Jacob Hoepfner, Winkler; Jacob T. Wiebe, Greenland; Heinrich A. Reimer, Landmark; Heinrich S. Voth, Roland; and Benjamin Janz, Steinbach.¹⁴ The Publishing House at Scottdale retained partial control with Aaron Loucks of Scottdale continuing as general director of the *MR*. This was due to the financial investment which Scottdale had in the publication, until such time when the Rundschau Publishing House could take over completely.¹⁵

Although the *MR* was edited in Winnipeg beginning with the first issue in October, 1923, it continued to be printed from Scottdale until December 12 of that year. Editorials by Herman Neufeld, editor, and A. Kroeker, editorial assistant, sought to establish the place of the *MR* in its new environment.

The contents of the *MR* continued to relate themselves to the Mennonite settlements, particularly in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and in Midwest states, and also to the movements of the immigrants from Russia. Several issues in 1925 contained special supplements listing the immigrants coming to Canada from Russia. Business advertising increased noticeably in 1926. For two decades the *MR* continued in this way to serve the church and community interests of the Mennonites, particularly in Canada. As the settlements were established and the Mennonites turned to mission, educational, and church interests this was quite accurately reflected in the content of the paper.

A turning point in the history of the *MR* came when The Christian Press, Ltd.,¹⁶ was purchased by a group of brethren who were members of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Canada. Most of the members of the group belonged to the Fuersorgekomitee of the Canadian conference.¹⁷ This was in October of 1945.

The purchase price had been \$34,000, representing 3,400 shares at \$10.00 each. Excepting 727 shares, which were held by shareholders in the United States, the business was the sole property of the Neufeld family. Neufeld had agreed to turn 400 shares over to the Canadian conference, and settled for \$30,000. Within a year 388 shareholders of the Mennonite Brethren group had purchased 1,875 shares.

Herman Neufeld resigned as editor and published a brief farewell statement on

the front page of the October 17, 1945, issue. Shortly after, H. F. Klassen was announced as editor and managing director of The Christian Press. A publisher's statement on the front page of the October 24 issue stated that the *MR* would continue in the tradition of serving the interests of all groups.

On December 15 the first official meeting of shareholders was held. Seventy delegates from five provinces attended. Elected to the Board of Directors were: C. A. DeFehr, H. F. Klassen, C. C. Warrentin, J. Janzen, B. B. Janz, Benj. Redekop, A. A. Kroeker, F. H. Friesen, and John Wall. A restatement of purpose came from this meeting and was published on the front page of the December 26 issue.

At the 1946 sessions of the Canadian Mennonite Brethren conference the chairman of the board reported on the new ownership of the Christian Press and the reason for the prompt action on the part of the Fuersorgekomitee. The conference approved the action wholeheartedly.

At the 1947 sessions of the conference H. F. Klassen, managing director, appealed to members of the conference to buy additional shares so that the control of The Christian Press would be guaranteed to rest with the Mennonite Brethren Church.

Although The Christian Press is not officially owned by the Mennonite Brethren Church, the control still resting with the Board of Directors elected at an annual meeting of the shareholders, the Canadian conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church has in recent years purchased additional shares and in addition contributes about \$1,500 in funds annually for free distribution of the *MR* in South America.¹⁸

In spite of this rigid denominational control, the editors and publishers of the *MR* continued to emphasize the inter-Mennonite purpose and quality of the paper. At least this was expressed in reports to the Canadian Mennonite Brethren conference almost every year since 1946.

After World War II the *MR* again played a major role in the refugee movement and reuniting of families. At the time of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the *MR* the Board of Directors spoke of the immigration movement in the 1870's and the immigrations following the first and second world wars as the three most outstanding periods in the history of the paper.

With the exception of the inter-Mennonite emphasis and content referred to above, the *MR* has since 1945 tended to overlay Mennonite Brethren interests. Although an accurate statistical analysis is hardly possible, a survey illustrates in a representative way this tendency.

In 1955 and the early months of 1956 the Russian Mennonite situation, the traditional *Rundschau* theme, has again returned to the columns of the paper. Since letters from relatives and friends in Russia have been coming through to Canadian

Mennonites, many of these have been published in the columns of the paper arousing widespread inter-Mennonite and inter-family interest. In the last few months the old column, "Verwandte und Freunde gesucht," has again been introduced, with as much as one page in a single issue being devoted to this section.

Conclusion

Although absolute conclusions from a study like this are hardly possible, it would be incomplete without a summary statement highlighting the factors that contributed to the making and unmaking of the *MR* as an inter-Mennonite periodical. These will be considered from a threefold point of view.

Publishing Base and Purpose: In the opinion of the writer, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad, as independent or non-Mennonite publishers, provided the original base for the growth of the paper as an inter-Mennonite paper. The publishers at Elkhart and Scottdale built on the foundation that had been laid, as did also the publishers at Winnipeg to a greater or lesser extent. In the case of the latter the rigid denominational control and interests in the last decade have tended to thwart the original purpose.

Editorial Policy: From the beginning to the present time the editors of the *MR* have (some more, some less) announced an inter-Mennonite purpose and policy. The policy introduced by Wm. Winsinger at Scottdale, however, could have proved disastrous to the paper had not the Russian situation demanded attention, thus reversing editorial policy of highlighting doctrinal and theological articles of a contentious nature, rather than news articles. As long as the editors of the paper have highlighted community interests rather than doctrinal and church interests they have been relatively successful in maintaining inter-Mennonite balance in the paper. As soon as church interests have been highlighted they have tended in the direction of individual groups.

Contents: The extensive news coverage in the early part of the twentieth century and the attention given to needs in and migrations from Russian Mennonite communities have undoubtedly contributed to

the success of the paper among all Mennonite groups. It seems altogether possible that the current contacts with the Mennonites in Russia will at least to a degree recall the original and long-time inter-Mennonite character of the *Menno-nitische Rundschau*.

This is one of seven articles in Frank Epp's study, "The Making and Unmaking of Inter-Mennonite Periodicals" (Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, 1956), under Cornelius Krahn as adviser.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Springer, N. P., "Nebraska Ansiedler" in *Menno-nitische Rundschau*.

² Funk, J. F., "Der Nebraska Ansiedler," *Menno-nitische Rundschau*, Vol. XLVIII (Sept. 2, 1925).

³ Springer, N. P., *op. cit.*

⁴ Funk, *op. cit.*

⁵ Bender, H. S., "John Fretz Funk" in *Menno-nitische Rundschau*.

⁶ Lohrentz, J. H., "John F. Harms" in *Menno-nitische Rundschau*.

⁷ Statement appearing under title on front page of *Menno-nitische Rundschau*, Vol. V (Jan. 1, 1882).

⁸ Publisher's statement, "Werbet fuer Euer Blatt," *MR* (Nov. 21, 1888).

⁹ *Ibid.* (May 15, 1883), 3.

¹⁰ "Die Verbreitung der Rundschau," *MR* (Oct. 8, 1890).

¹¹ *MR* (Jan. 11, 1899).

¹² Fast, M. B., *MR* (Jan. 6, 1909).

¹³ Fast, M. B., *MR* (Dec. 23, 1908).

¹⁴ The names of the members of the Publication Board are listed under the masthead of the early issues of the *MR* published from Winnipeg.

¹⁵ Aaron Loucks's name also appeared on the masthead. His position was given as "General Director," with his address as Scottdale, Pa.

¹⁶ The *Rundschau* Publishing House had been reorganized as The Christian Press, Ltd., in 1940.

¹⁷ DeFehr, C. A., "Menno-nitische Rundschau," *Yearbook of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America*, 1946, 73.

¹⁸ See reports of *Menno-nitische Rundschau* or The Christian Press, Ltd., in 1947-55 *Yearbooks of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church*.

Origin of Mennonite Publishing House

BY DANIEL HERTZLER

I. Beginnings of Mennonite Publishing Work. It appears that the first Mennonite publishing house in our country was the one operated by Joseph Funk. This was located at Singers Glen, Virginia, and began printing in 1847. It is famous for the publishing of the "Harmonia Sacra" songbook. The influence of this publishing house was most apparent in the Shenandoah Valley.

Of more significance was the publishing establishment set up by John F. Funk in Chicago, Illinois, which began publishing the "Herald of Truth" in January, 1864.

Funk was an outstanding person with great leadership ability. He became alarmed at the condition of the church as expressed by the many young men who were entering the army during the Civil War. To counteract this trend he published a tract on nonresistance in 1863. Then in 1864 came the paper. In the first issue he said, "As a corrupt paper is so powerful to do evil, so will a moral, a Christian paper be mighty to do good."

Circulation of the "Herald of Truth" exceeded 1,000 copies by the end of 1864 and Funk considered his venture a suc-

cess. At this time the publishing work was done in his "spare time," since he was a lumber dealer. Some days he worked as many as 20 hours.

II. *Growth of Mennonite Publishing Work.* In the spring of 1866 Funk sold his lumber business and on April 6, 1867, moved to Elkhart, Indiana, to devote full time to his publishing and church work. His brother joined the company in 1869 and in 1875 it was reorganized as Mennonite Publishing Company. Although assuming the name "Mennonite," this company was privately owned. In time the plant of this company came to be known unofficially as Mennonite Publishing House. Business continued to grow and operations were expanded. Besides the publication of periodicals, Sunday-school quarterlies, almanacs, and tracts in both English and German, Funk published books. Two outstanding projects were the translation and publication in English of *Martyrs' Mirror* and the *Works* of Menno Simons.

By 1908 the "Herald of Truth" was the organ of 17 Mennonite conferences although not officially sponsored by the church. At this time the company had a circulation of periodicals numbering 21,000 weekly.

Financial difficulties beset the company in the years following 1900. These were partly caused by the failure of a local bank. These problems were added to some other dissatisfaction with the Mennonite Publishing Company that was present in the church. Funk had offered to sell the "Herald" to the church at a number of times but the offer was never accepted.

About this time there appeared two rival organizations, the Mennonite Book and Tract Society, in 1892, and the Gospel Witness Company, at Scottdale, which began publishing the "Gospel Witness" in April, 1905. Perhaps they were not strictly rivals but their work tended to overlap that of the Mennonite Publishing Company.

III. *Birth of Mennonite Publishing House.* Finally the church awakened to the need of owning its publications. In 1898 the Kansas-Nebraska Conference went on record in favor of this move. In May, 1907, the Ohio Conference recommended it. By November, 1907, when the General Conference met at Greentown, Indiana, nine district conferences had voted in favor of church-owned publications and appointed representatives for a Publication Committee. General Conference voted unanimously to support this move and appointed three representatives to work with the appointees of the district conferences.

Within a few months these church representatives had purchased the books of the Mennonite Book and Tract Society, the complete plant and publications of the Gospel Witness Company, and as many of the assets of the Mennonite Publishing Company as were felt essential to the publication work of the church. This change-over was not made without incident. In

fact, it included the solving of some rather dramatic problems.

The Gospel Witness Company and the Mennonite Book and Tract Society were paid cost price for their materials and went out of business. They were young organizations and apparently the change-over did not affect them so greatly since some of the same persons remained in the work. The older company posed a different problem.

Funk and his associates were willing to sell all of their periodicals, Sunday-school quarterlies, and related items. However, the price set on these publications was much higher than the committee representing the church was willing to pay. The church offered \$8,000 for publications which the company valued at \$20,500. After deliberation the company reduced its price to \$14,250. This was still unsatisfactory to the committee; so it appeared for a time that the Mennonite Church would become a rival to the Mennonite Publishing Company.

The Mennonite Publication Committee met at Goshen, Indiana, January 8-10, 1908, and organized the Mennonite Publication Board. On January 9 their place of business was named *Mennonite Publishing House*. This was the beginning of our present publishing house. However, it did not begin to function until about the first of April, 1908.

The problem of purchasing the *Herald of Truth* and other publications of the Mennonite Publishing Company was again taken up before the actual beginning of operations by the new company. Throughout the church persons of influence were concerned that a merger of the two publications, *Gospel Witness* and *Herald of Truth*, could be brought about.

After further negotiations, the Publication Committee agreed to pay an additional \$2,500 for the periodicals of the Mennonite Publishing Company. They also agreed to make some other purchases of books and related items. Thus, a very critical situation was averted.

IV. *Conclusion.* From the facts of the story a few conclusions seem apparent. They are listed here.

1. The present Mennonite Publishing House was founded in 1908. It was named in the meeting of the Publication Committee at Goshen, Indiana, January 9, 1908. It began operations about April first of that year.

2. The name "Mennonite Publishing House," as unofficially applied to the plant of the Mennonite Publishing Company, dates back almost to the years following the organization of that company in May, 1875.

3. The confusion surrounding the establishment of a church-controlled publishing house was unfortunate and we can be thankful that the problems were brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

4. While it might appear that the merger of 1908 was simply the consolidation of three private publishing interests into one church-controlled interest, it seems that consideration should be given to the extensive circulation and influence of the Mennonite Publishing Company.

5. Inasmuch as we may choose to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Mennonite Publishing House in 1958 it seems that we should consider 1904 as an anniversary commemorating a beginning that was in some ways more significant than the founding of our present publishing house in 1908.

News Notes

Printed in the last issue of the BULLETIN (July, 1956) was a list of district conference historians. Since then two additional appointments have been made. Arthur Nafziger, Hopedale, Illinois, has been appointed by the Illinois Conference, as the first conference historian of the Illinois Conference. Albert Guengerich, Mirror Landing P.O., Smith, Alberta, has been appointed to succeed the late Ezra Stauffer as historian for the Alberta-Saskatchewan Conference.

* * *

J. C. Fretz, a member of the Historical Committee and historian for the Ontario Conference, passed to his reward very suddenly on August 22, 1956. He was 70 years old.

Bro. Fretz was on the way to prayer meeting and after stopping to purchase gas and oil for his car, he drove from the service station. After bringing the car to a halt he turned off the switch and passed away. Death was attributed to a heart attack.

Bro. Fretz was a member of the Shantz Mennonite Church of Baden, Ontario, where he also served as deacon. He was

well known as former manager of the Golden Rule Bookstore, Kitchener, from which position he retired in 1955. He was a former public school teacher and ardently interested in Mennonite history.

The funeral was held on Sunday afternoon, August 26, at the First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, with a second service taking place at the Wideman Mennonite Church, Markham, prior to burial in the Wideman Cemetery. Leslie Witmer and Simon Martin conducted the services.

Surviving are his wife, the former Martha Reesor, two sons, and two daughters.

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A history of the Mennonite Publishing House is being planned for the fiftieth anniversary of the House in 1958. The writer, John A. Hostetler, would appreciate access to any old photographs of early Mennonite publishing buildings: John F. Funk or Mennonite Publishing Company of Elkhart, Indiana; Joseph Funk of Singers Glen, Virginia. Readers knowing of any such photographs may help in this work by sending them to the writer, John A. Hostetler, Scottdale, Pennsylvania.